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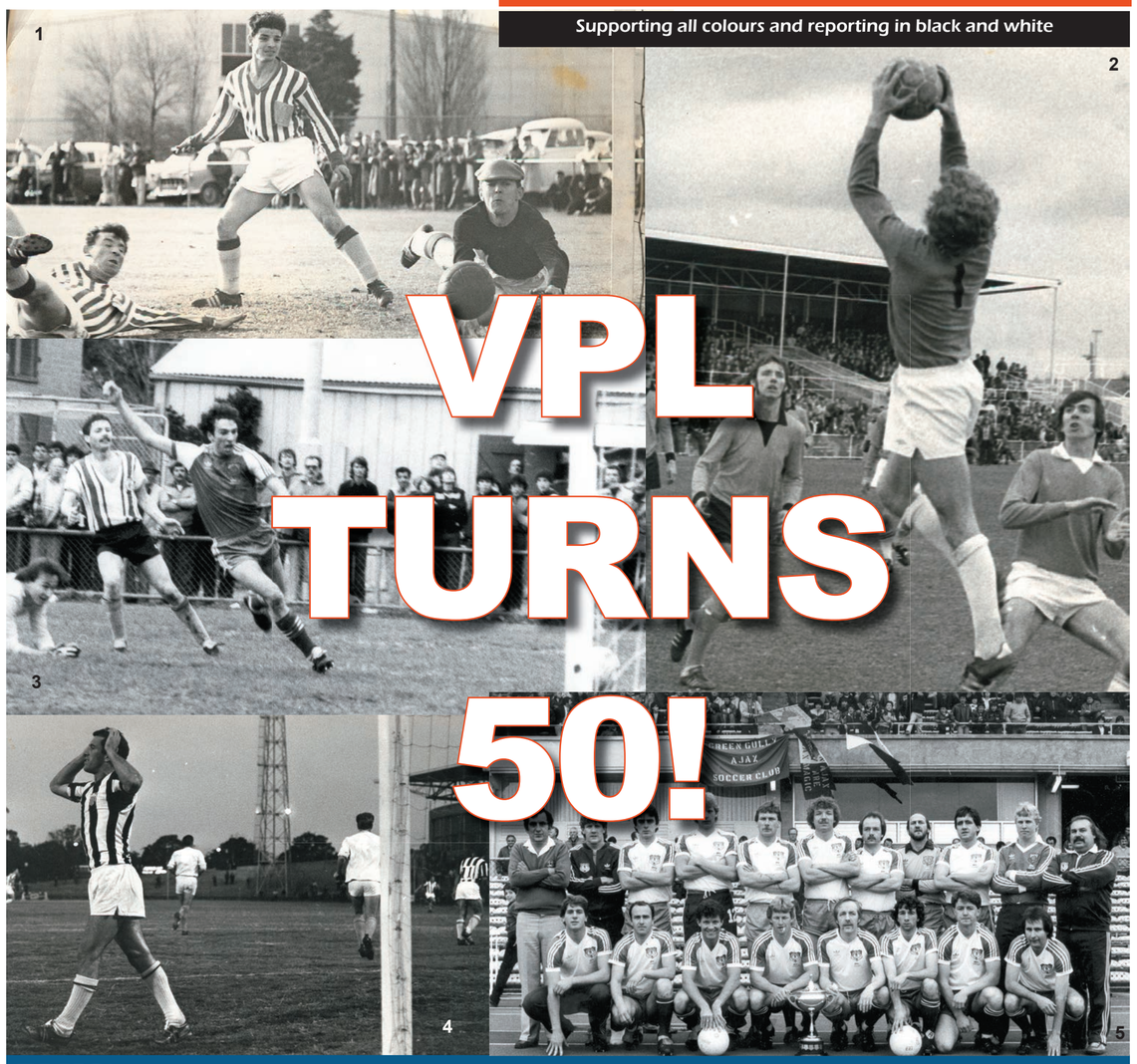

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THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES DEPT.

By Craig MacKenzie

THREEPEATS FOR HELLAS, GULLY, MAGIC, RUNAWAY WIN FOR PORT

South Melbourne Hellas, Green Gully Ajax and Altona Magic are the only clubs in 50 years of Victorian State League and Premier League football to win championships three years in a row while the greatest winning margin belongs to Port Melbourne Sharks who won the 1995 Premier League 'minor premiership' by a staggering 22 points.

In 1963 Hellas recruited Tommy Anderson from George Cross, the same Tommy Anderson that bobs up now and then on SBS TV. A further recruiting drive in 1964 yielded former Manchester United apprentice Ernie Ackerley, Jim Pyrgolios from Panathinaikos, Sam Service and Jim Adam. These recruits played an integral role in kickstarting a run of three consecutive titles in 1964, 1965 and 1966. Winger Leo Damianakos from Kalamata was added to the squad in 1965 after waiting a full year for his clearance, but one of the club's greatest ever imports was to arrive and have a spectacular impact on its fortunes for the 1966 season.

Kostas Nestorides was already a household name in Greece when Hellas snared his signature. Born in Athens in 1930, his senior career started at Panionios where he played until 1955. An illustrious spell at AEK began in 1957 after the star striker was forced to sit out the 1956 season because of a dispute between Panionios and AEK over his pending transfer. But the wait was well worth it for AEK as Nestorides won top scorer honours in Greece for five consecutive seasons between 1958 and 1963.

Less than three years later he was playing for Hellas and his presence immediately doubled attendances. He certainly played his part on the field by ending the 1966 season as leading State League scorer.

Green Gully's title threepeat started in 1981. Bobby McLachlan had taken over the coaching reins for the previous season in unusual circumstances.

"I wasn't even interested in the job," said McLachlan. "But (club president) Guy Spiteri kept at me and eventually I agreed to a meeting. I took my young son Cameron with me and drove from Blackburn to Green Gully on a cold, wet, wintry day and when I got there the first thing Guy said to me was 'we're stuffed and you're the man that can get us out of this'. When I drove back home later I didn't even notice Cameron next to me in the car because I had that many thoughts going through my head about signing this player and that player."

Kostas Nestorides

The runaway Port Melbourne Sharks side of 1995.

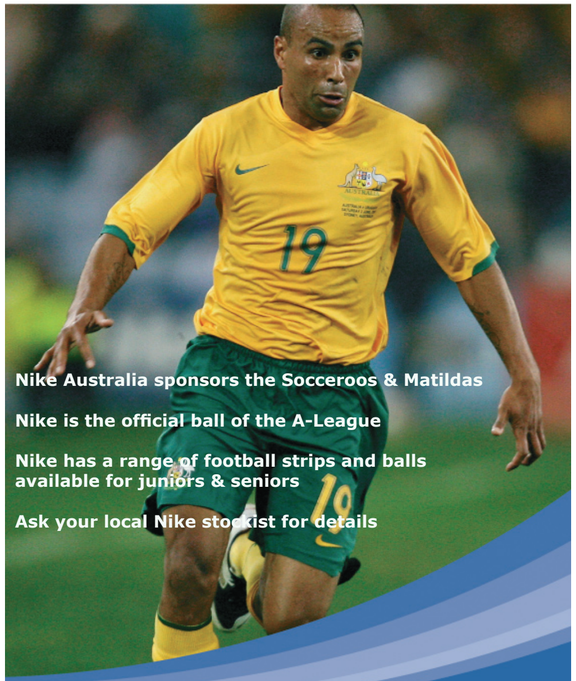
And sign he did. During McLachlan's tenure at Gully (Len McKendry took over for the successful 1983 season after McLachlan had left to join Footcsray JUST) he coached an Australian international (Billy Vojtek), a Maltese international (Willie Vassallo), an Irish international (Jimmy Dunne) and a Welsh international (David Smallman).

He also lured Gus Macleod, Peter Lewis, Paul Lewis, John Gardiner, Peter Boyle, Peter Dickson, Bill Morrey, Alan Bennett and a host of others during Gully's most successful ever era (for fans that remember Morrey, next time you see his nephew on TV you'll understand which side of the family Manchester United and England superstar Wayne Rooney gets his power and aggression from, and a fair bit of ability too).

The Takis Zvigos-coached Port Melbourne left their rivals floundering in 1995 as they amassed 22 wins, three draws and one solitary loss throughout the Premier League season. Although the side didn't reach the Grand Final that year, the 22-point margin to second-placed Altona Magic (who beat Bulleen 3-2 in that Grand Final) remains the greatest winning margin in the history of the game at the elite level in Victoria.

The mainstays of what must rate as one of the best ever squads in Port's history included Con Argyriou, Dean Fak, George Svigos, John Dimitrelos, Leo Kyriakopoulos, Michael Lilikakis, Nick Papadopoulos, Nick Tsaltas and Sava Rusmir.

Due to space restrictions we'll take a look back on the all conquering Magic side of the 1990's in next week's GW.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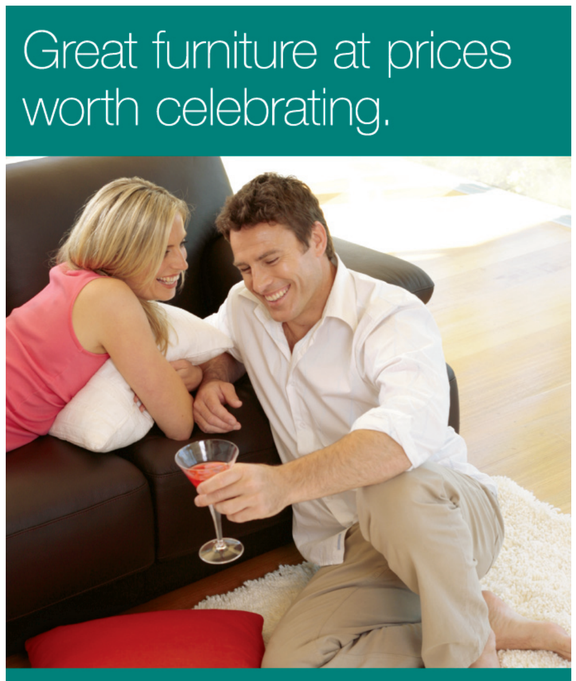
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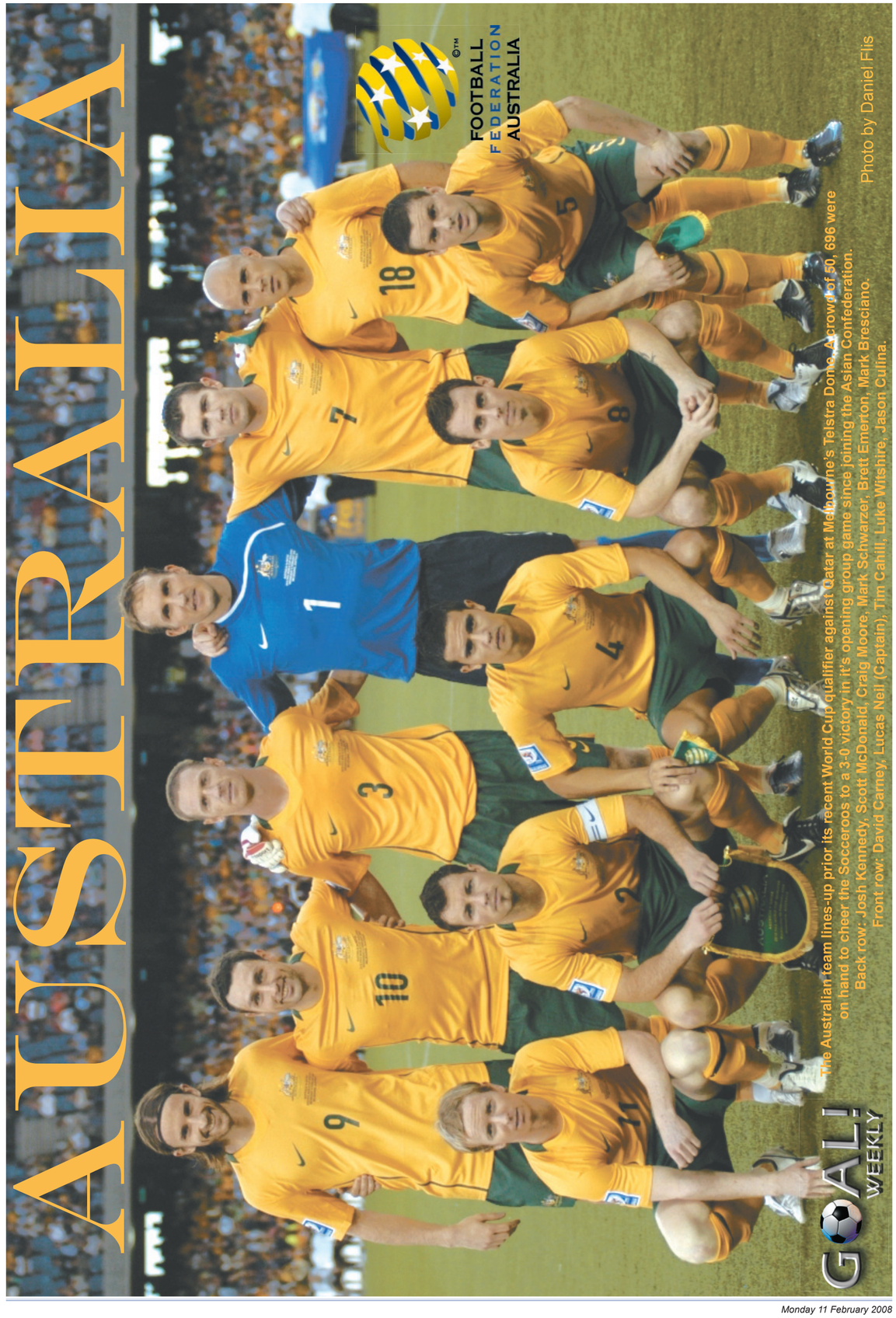
AUSTRALIA
FOOTBALL FEDERATION AUSTRALIA
Photo by Daniel Flis
The Australian team lines-up prior its recent World Cup qualifier against Qatar at Melbourne's Telstra Dome. A crowd of 50, 696 were on hand to cheer the Socceroos to a 3-0 victory in it's opening group game since joining the Asian Confederation.
Back row: Josh Kennedy, Scott McDonald, Craig Moore, Mark Schwarzer, Brett Emerton, Mark Bresciano.
Front row: David Carney, Lucas Neill (Captain), Tim Cahill, Luke Wilshire, Jason Culina.
GOAL! WEEKLY

GOAL! WEEKLY

This week's line-up

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Goal! Weekly endeavours to be as accurate as possible with everything it publishes.

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A message from the FFV's CEO...

The 2008 season looks set to be a big year and we at FFV are very excited about the up and coming Foxtel Cup and Women's Premier League seasons.

Exciting changes to the competition this year include the promotion of Frankston Pines and Coburg United into the Men's Premier League with South Melbourne and Gippsland Soccer League joining the Women's.

With competition set to kick off this week, we look with anticipation to what we are confident will be a very exciting 26 rounds of the Foxtel Cup.

The Women's Premier League also looks set for an enthralling 2008 season after Heidelberg's close victory in last year's grand final.

We wish all the clubs the very best for the coming season and hope that this year the competition is played with excitement and enthusiasm and in the true spirit of sportsmanship.

Mark Rendell
Chief Executive Officer
Football Federation Australia

The FFV's CEO, Mark Rendell (right) with Foxtel Cup coach Mike Chatzitrifonas at last year's Gold Medal presentation night.

THE BIG KICK-OFF!

To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Victorian State/Premier League and the commencement of Season 2008 lucky football fans across the state will be able to receive a complimentary copy of Goal! Weekly upon entry to any Foxtel Cup game this weekend.

Over the next 9 months comprising 26 rounds of competition, 182 games and a Top Six Final Series, 14 of the state's best teams will embark on a quest to be crowned champions of Victoria. Come 5pm on Grand Final day in October only one team will remain standing having earned the right to have its name inscribed on an honours board alongside many great champions of previous campaigns.

Rest assured readers, Goal! Weekly will be upholding its commitment to Victorian football and we'll be there at every match following every kick in order to bring you all the ecstasy and agony of all the weekend action every Monday at a newsagent near you.

An exciting year of Jubilee football lays ahead, and like you, we hold great anticipation of what promises to be a truly enthralling season, adding to the rich history of Victoria's elite competition.

In bygone years fans have seen many a great player grace the stage of the State/VPL, including ex-Socceroos and legends such as Jimmy Mackay, Billy Vojtek, Jimmy Armstrong and Branko Buljevic, just to name a few. But, in recent times the Foxtel Cup has become a genuine stepping stone for players who aspire to reach the greater heights in their respective football careers.

Players of the calibre of Josip Skoko (originally North Geelong), Sash Ognenovski (Fawkner to Qld Roar), Daniel Vasilevski (Altona Magic to Melb Victory), Daniel Piorkowski (Knights to Victory) and Steven Pace (Lions to Victory), again, just to name a few, have gone on to fulfil their higher footballing ambitions after originally turning out for a VPL side.

Although the A-League generally comprises the best players in Australia, the beauty of the Foxtel Cup is that is provides fans the opportunity to witness some of the country's future stars before the rest of the nation gets a glimpse.

No doubt, competition will be fierce this year as clubs prepare to wrestle the Preston Lions for its Foxtel Cup crown. Major transfer activity taken place over the summer months is testimony to that, and you can read all about it in the inside pages of this mag.

No doubt, we're in for a real feast and look forward to enjoying the football that lays ahead.

Remember, if you want to keep up to date with all the action from the Foxtel Cup then don't forget to grab your copy of Goal! Weekly every Monday and support grass-roots football. Enjoy!

FOXTEL CUP ROUND 1 FIXTURES

Richmond v Preston Lions
Kevin Bartlett Reserve Fri 15 Feb 8:15PM

Frankston Pines v Oakleigh Cannons
Monterey Reserve Sat 16 Feb 6:00PM

Western Suburbs v Coburg Utd
Ralph Reserve Sat 16 Feb 6:00PM

Altona Magic v Green Gully Cavaliers
Paisley Park Sat 16 Feb 7:30PM

Fawkner Blues v Melbourne Knights
CB Smith Reserve Sat 17 Feb 6:00PM

Heidelberg Utd v South Melbourne
Olympic Village Sat 17 Feb 6:00PM

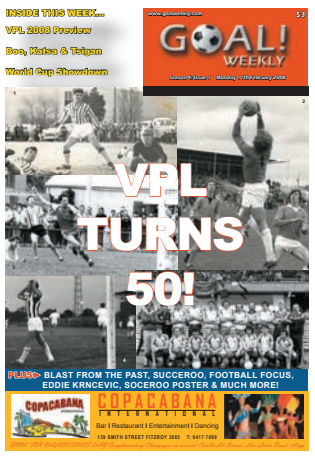
Whittlesea Zebras v A.I.S Epping
Soccer Stadium Sat 18 Feb 8:15PM

PREMIER LEAGUE COMPETITION CELEBRATES 50!

The Front Cover

Goal! Weekly celebrates the Victorian State/Premier League turning 50 this year. The photos from top left to bottom right are as follows:

1. Cassar, Eddy Sacco and 'keeper Hobson watch the ball go past for a corner kick in an early State League match. *Photo: Uwe Kuessner. Les Shorrock collection.*
2. Full strecth save by John Scholton of Sunshine City against South Melbourne Hellas in the mid-seventies. From left Steve Kokoska, Dave Anderson, Scholten and Jim Armstrong of Hellas. *Les Shorrock collection.*
3. David Hogben of Green Gully scoring the winner against George Cross in the Maltese derby in the State League in 1983. *Photo: Les Shorrock*
4. Winger Jimmy Malloy holds his head after missing an open goal for Juventus at Olympic Park in January 1968. *Les Shorrock collection.*
5. Green Gully Ajax, State League Champions in 1983. Back row, left to right: Mario Borg (Manager), Steve McLelland, David Smallman (Player-coach), Ronnie Kremers, Peter Lewis (Captain), Stuart Cannell, Jim Williams (Assistant Player-coach), Lou Denys, Steve Short, Steve McKenna, John Borg (Masser). Front row: Fabio Mansinelli, Willie Vassallo, Bobby Toal, Paul Lewis, Peter Boyle, David Hogben, Danny Beranic, Kit Greechan. *Photo: Les Shorrock.*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By Craig MacKenzie

VPL COMES OF AGE

With stars that graced the stage

Great players, great rivalries and great characters were the hallmarks of Victoria's State League from its inception in 1958 to its transformation into the Premier League for the 1991 season.

In some respects, when the State League became the Premier League, a chapter of the game's history in Victoria was closed. But it's a chapter that remains dear to the hearts of many.

As a teenager in the 1960s my first impression of a State League game at Olympic Park was to be a lasting one. It was a clash between George Cross and Polonia and although my parents and I were guests of George Cross that day (we knew the parents of the recently imported Scottish striker Nicol McCallum, who would go on to be an inductee to the Western Australian Football Hall of Fame) it was a Polish player that caught my eye.

His name was Ziggy Gadecki, one of many quality Polonia imports of that era who had represented Poland at Olympic level. Gadecki bamboozled his opponents who struggled to get the ball off him and although the passionate George Cross fans were roaring their approval whenever Archie Campbell strutted his stuff out wide, it was the Polish star that shone brightest for me.

Although Polonia as an entity would drift in and out of view over later years, players such as classy sweeper Stefan Mila and striker Janusz Przybyla flew the Polish flag high.

Former JUST fans still talk about Frank Micic, Branko Buljevic, and Tommy Stankovic in reverential fashion. Micic, who won two Argus Medals and a Bill Fleming Medal (the major press awards of that era) was all elegance and control and it remains a mystery to many that he only made nine

1980 Gold Medal winner Bobby McGuinness of Morwell Falcons gives chase to Polonia's Stefan Mila during a State League match in the 80's. Not to be outdone, the classy Polish midfielder also won the award in 1983.

Socceroo appearances. Buljevic (30 Socceroo appearances) had great close control and the ability to glide past defenders, both hallmarks of many JUST players of that time. Stankovic was a former OFK Belgrade and Red Star player who was still playing at State League level as a 44-year-old (Croatia legend and 44-time Socceroo, Billy Vojtek, always wanted to break Stankovic's age record. Vojtek failed but it wasn't for the lack of trying).

In the late 1960s, Juventus imported 19 players in just two seasons! Its most famous signing was former Sunderland captain George Kinnell, cousin of Rangers legend Jim Baxter.

Hungarian-backed Melbourne won its only State League title in 1967. Atti Abonyi (89 Socceroo appearances), Steve Bleskany and Joe Palinkas were stars at Melbourne over the years as was Scottish import Alistair Scott, who also played for Victoria.

And there was never any dearth of characters in the State League. One of the most controversial was Hakoah goalkeeper Mike O'Hara. He was part of a 1966 side that included Hugh Murney, Dick van Alphen (10 Socceroo appearances), Jim Armstrong (four Socceroo appearances and all-time leading State League scorer), Alan Stenhouse, Keith Fry, Ted Smith and Ian Monan.

O'Hara had a book published in 2006. Entitled "Friends: An Autobiography of a Former Serving Officer of Her Majesty's Secret Intelligence Service – MI6" it describes that Hakoah side as being "the scourge" of the league and that it could have "held its own with most of the teams in the English Football League". That may well have been so but unfortunately for Hakoah in 1966 it couldn't hold its own with South Melbourne Hellas, Slavia and Melbourne which all finished above the Jewish-backed outfit. The sad fact of the matter is that despite the quality of players that turned out for Hakoah, the club never won a State League championship, a feat it aspired to for many years until its deathknell sounded at the end of the 1981 season when it amalgamated with Hellas.

What is it about goalkeepers? Former Heidelberg and Croatia custodian Peter Blasby still holds the Big Mac eating record (trust me, not many teeth marks on the burgers) at the Cheltenham outlet of McDonald's and some of his end-of-season exploits have gone down in folklore. Blasby's pranks in the kitchen of a hotel in Tasmania one year are still talked about as is his impersonation of John Cleese in that famous Ministry of Silly Walks skit. Oh, and Blasby also is planning to have a book published. We wait with baited breath.

When Blasby played with Heidelberg, Croatia and Morwell Falcons he was in illustrious company. Players of the quality of Jim Tansey, Jim O'Reilly, Arthur McMillan, George Gillan, Pat and Vince Bannon, Ian Gibson and Andy Bozikas were some of his Heidelberg teammates; "Chalky" Adams, Steve Short, John Gardiner, Ante Bilaver, Alan Kerr, Grant Smart, "Butch" Kokoska, Carl Gilder, Davie Brogan, Tommy Cumming, Noel Mitten, Joe Tront and Josip Biskic were some of his Croatia cohorts; and at Morwell he played in the same side as Jim Maclean whom he rates as "the best midfielder I ever played with".

Cumming was a great character and a great drawcard. A pocket battleship discarded by Glasgow Rangers for being "vertically challenged", his determination – and no mean ability – made him a star in Victoria. One memorable moment came when Cumming was playing for the state team against visiting New York Cosmos on 21 October, 1979.

Cosmos had arguably one of the most star studded line-ups ever to grace our shores. The legendary Franz Beckenbauer, Giorgio Chinaglia, Vladislav Bogicevic, Carlos Alberto, Johan Neeskens, Julio Cesar Romero and goalkeeper Hubert Birkenmeier were coached by Brazilian mentor, Professor Julio Mazzei (he really was a professor). Cosmos' right back was Andranik Eskandarian, an Armenian by birth who was an Iranian international. What transpired during that clash still makes the spine tingle to this day. Cumming, playing on the left wing for Victoria, was dispossessed by Eskandarian who then motored forward, completely oblivious to the fact that his diminutive opponent had taken it upon himself to track back at the rate of knots to retrieve the situation. What started as a low roar as Cumming closed on Eskandarian became a deafening crescendo as spectators in the main Olympic Park grandstand took to their feet to urge Cumming on. When Cumming slid in and tackled Eskandarian the explosion of approval from that grandstand could have registered on the Richter scale. It was Melbourne Victory-level support and then some. It was awesome.

Hands up who knows who the guest of honour was that year at Green Gully's presentation night? Prior to the Victoria–Cosmos clash, the New York visitors had requested a practice game and that was duly organised against Green Gully, then coached by Bobby MacLachlan.

"Showing Beckenbaur, Chinaglia, Bogicevic and Neeskens into the Gully dressing room was hard to believe. Harder still was when just 17 minutes into the game Paul Wade scored and we were leading 1-0!" said MacLachlan with a chuckle. Beckenbauer later honoured a commitment made at that warm-up game to attend Gully's presentation night.

Indicative of the fierce rivalries of the State League was McLachlan's pivotal signing of Gardiner during that era. Many on the Gully committee were opposed to the move as Gardiner had a long association with rival Maltese club George Cross. Indeed, clashes between these two outfits were akin to internecine warfare. As were clashes between Hellas and Heidelberg Alexander, and Croatia and JUST.

The great characters of the game were not confined to the playing field though. Photographer Les Shorrock was synonymous with the State League. Fiesty was a sometime soft epithet for the big Englishman, who was commonly mistaken for a Scot due to his penchant for wearing a tartan bonnet. If the big man had an opinion he was never backward in offering it. One day at Middle Park he was shoehorned into the announcer's booth at the end of the press box. He'd been grumbling for some time about the dwindling attendances at Hellas-Hakoah games and finally he could take it no longer. As the players lined up before the kick-off he refused to announce the line-ups. Instead he decided to announce the spectators to the dumbfounded players. It went along the lines of "and just two rows in front of me sits Joe Bloggs from Altona who, like me, is wondering what the hell we're all doing here".

Danny McCluskey and Nat Little were great combatants. The fans at Kim Reserve one day, when Altona City hosted Frankston City, were treated to a précis of the history of sectarianism in a land some 12,000 miles away as the pair elbowed, kicked and slagged each other for the full 90 minutes. Mind you, I don't think we worried too much about religious vilification back then.

Three pillars of the State League Jimmy Dunne, Bobby McLachlan and Billy Vojtek share a light moment.

It's difficult to talk about the history of the Victorian State League without making mention of the late great Jim Mackay. The midfield maestro, best known for scoring the goal against South Korea in Hong Kong that took Australia into the 1974 World Cup Finals in West Germany, was an amazingly unassuming man. I once asked him how he was able to play the first-time ball "blind", intrigued by watching his head over the ball as he received it before unleashing a defence-splitting first-time pass, head still bowed. "It's easy," said Mackay. "You know you're going to get the ball so you have a wee keek before you get it and by the time you get it you know what to do with it." For Mackay it was that simple.

When the late Laurie Schwab arrived back in Melbourne after covering the 1974 World Cup Finals, he sought and gained Mackay's approval to have THE BOOT, the one that scored THAT goal against South Korea, mounted and presented as a soccer press award to the best young player in Victoria. From memory it was only presented a couple of times before it went missing but Schwab went to his grave never knowing that the boot on the trophy was not the one that Mackay wore as he struck his historic thunderbolt. Mackay and his teammates flew back to Australia after their Hong Kong triumph to be greeted by a rousing reception at Sydney airport. Mackay spied a youngster overcome with the emotion of the occasion and handed him the famous boot.

South Melbourne lines up before a match at Olympic Park in 1964 and on its way to clinching three Victorian championships in a row .

There are hundreds of names worthy of mention in this article. For goodness sake, how can the great Jimmy Rooney not have been mentioned before? But a space restriction is a powerful enemy. What needs to be said is that it's difficult to think of many players who left the State League poorer for their involvement. The great players and great characters of yesteryear provided a platform for today's stars, akin to passing on a legacy, one that is well worth nurturing. Let the new season begin.

Preston Lions

LIONS PREPARE TO DEFEND CROWN

Lozanovski means business

Without six starting players (and one goalscoring substitute) from their 3-1 Grand Final triumph over Whittlesea just over four months ago, a new look Preston side will be desperate to emulate their 2007 success despite the loss of star players such as Zoran Petrevski, Steven Pace and Pece Siveski.

Without Petrevski, who scored more than a quarter of the Lions' Foxtel Cup goals last year, Preston will no doubt find themselves increasingly reliant on veteran striker Blaze Georgiovski. At the other end of the field, goalkeeper Ljupco Acevski returns from a spell with Czech top division side FK Most Siad while last season's custodian Savas Ozdemir departs the club.

Other notable signings include the former Essendon trio of Victor Pititto, Nicholas Schwal and Frank Catalano, who will add some depth and experience to the depleted Lions' outfit.

Despite the significant changes in personnel, coach Goran Lozanovski will remain confident in his ability to structure a lineup which will be able to challenge for September action. But with the mouth-watering Grand Final rematch against a determined Whittlesea outfit coming as early as the second round, and tricky away fixtures to newly promoted Frankston Pines and Coburg Utd in the opening five rounds, Preston will certainly have their work cut out for them.

Off the field the club remains in serious financial difficulty, with ongoing calls to their loyal supporter base for assistance. But come February 15th, this will all be forgotten as the Lions' tackle Richmond at Kevin Bartlett Reserve in the much anticipated season opener.

By Addy Wetzler

Photos by John Punshon

Bill Fleming winner Tony Sterjovski will be pinacle to the Lions attempts of a consecutive VPL crown.

Coach Goran Lozanovski capped off a marvellous season by being named VPL Coach of the Year.

Preston enjoys the spoils of last year's campaign.

Lions fans will be out in force to cheer their beloved team again in '08.

Preston Lions Fast Facts

Preston Lions Fast Facts

Formed: 1947

President: Miro Josevski

Captain: John Sapazovski

Coach: Goran Lozanovski

Ground address:
BT Connor Reserve Mel: 18-B2

VPL championships:
(4) 2007, 2002, 1994, 1980

Final position in 2007: Minor Premiers

Top Six Series: Champions
Defeated Melbourne Knights 1-0 in Qualifying Final
Lost 2-1 to Whittlesea Zebras in Major Semi-Final
Defeated Whittlesea Zebras 3-1 in Grand Final

Top scorer in 2007:
Zoran Petrevski, 11 goals

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007:
Pece Siveski, 19 votes

2008 Squad
Lupce Acevski (returns from stint in Czech Republic)
Aleksandar Stojanovski
Goce Gruevski
Les Anastasiou
Stephen Masalkovski
Victor Pititto (from Essendon Royals)
Michael Miskas
Nicholas Schwal (from Essendon Royals)
Marinos Gasparis
Wayne Spiteri (IN)
Robert Najdovski
Frank Catalano (from Essendon Royals)
Ricky Chillico (from Fawkner Blues)
Nick Lazarevski
John Sapazovski
Bale Micovski
Nicolas Alvarez (IN)
Blaze Georgioski
Igor Kolevski (IN)

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ZEBRAS READY TO EARN STRIPES

New faces replace departures

Expectation can be a cumbersome thing. But in its absence, a team and individuals benefit from performances unrestrained by expectancy. This is true of the Whittlesea Zebras' 2007 Foxtel Cup campaign.

As a combined footballing entity – of Whittlesea and Bulleen – in its embryonic stages, no great achievements were expected of the Zebras in 2007. By season's end, however, the side had achieved a third placed finish on the table and ended as eventual runners-up of the competition following defeat to Preston Lions in the grand final.

Ex-Socceroo Peter Ollerton assumed control of the side mid-way through the 2007 season and guided the team's progression to the season's concluding fixture.

In charge from the outset in 2008, Ollerton has had to contend with a mass squad exodus, the events of which disrupted his off-season plans. "I only thought we'd need three or four players but with the dramatic change of players, that became six, seven, eight, nine players," he said.

Kristian Rees (Wellington Phoenix), Hamlet Armenian (South Melbourne) and Tex Apostilikas (Oakleigh) are the most significant departures from the 2007 Zebras side. Mark Vazzocchi (Fawkner Blues) has been brought in as intended replacement for Rees while the colossal Jerry Karpeh (Perth Glory) will partially off-set the loss of Armenian and Apostilikas.

Karpeh's capture is thanks to Ollerton's pre-existing relationship with Perth Glory coach Dave Mitchell and his assistant Robbie Dunn. Ollerton also attributes the acquisition of midfielder and Glory-trialist Sebastian Petrovich to his association with the Glory coaching staff.

Fellow midfielder Goran Talevski arrives from Altona Magic and he is accompanied by Brazilian defender, Junior. Talevski is a championship winner with Hajduk Split while Junior arrives following an unsuccessful trial at Adelaide United. He is said to bring the customary Brazilian technical abilities and has the ability to play in the centre or left-side of defence.

Ollerton acknowledges that the transfer turmoil of the off-season has been a set-back for the club but also provides a reminder that little was expected of his club last season.

"It's basically starting from scratch again this year, we've only been able to maintain a handful of players that were working with me last year, the rest are basically new players," he said.

"Our expectations last year were to survive...nobody expected us to finish third in the league and go all the way through to the final.

"Last year I think we got a lot further than we should have done; I don't know whether to put that down to good coaching or bad coaching from opposition, or the lord must like me – I don't know what it is.

"It's great for the players because they did very well, they worked very hard and in the end we were a little bit unfortunate not to go all the way...It's something we would have liked to have built from – and thought we would have built from – but with this mass exodus of players, it's now back to the drawing board."

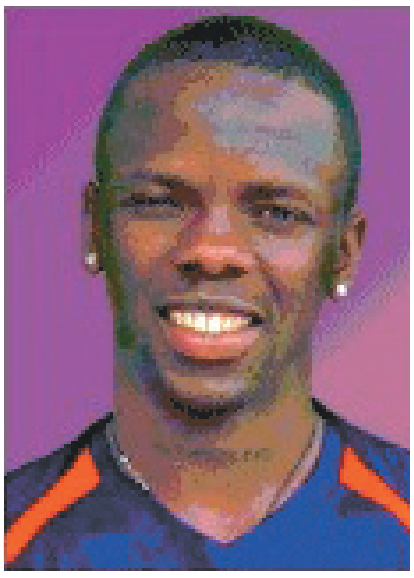
The off-season exodus has left the squad short of depth and experience, particularly in the attacking department. Though, Jerry Karpeh's strength and ability to hold up the ball and bring others into play will help counter the side's dearth of forwards.

Despite the disturbance caused by off-season departures, the team has the advantage of the vast coaching nous provided by Peter Ollerton, and the benefit of the soon-to-be completed new club facilities that act as a demonstration of the club's off-field health and are sure to benefit on-field performance.

By Sebastian Kipman

Photos by John Punshon

In its debut season since formation the Zebras went mighty close to winning the Foxtel Cup and will hope to go one better this time around.



Jerry Karpeh arrives at Epping Stadium after finishing Top Scorer in the WA Premier League and a stint at Perth Glory in the A-League.

The highly credentialed Goran Talevski will add strength to the Zebras line-up in '08.

WHITTLESEA ZEBRAS FAST FACTS

Formed: 2006

President: Sam Cuteri

Captain: Ross Antoniadis

Coach: Peter Ollerton

Ground address:
Epping Stadium, Epping, Mel: 182-B4

VPL championships: None

Final position in 2007: 3rd

Top Six Series: Runners-Up
Defeated Green Gully Cavaliers 2-1 in Elimination Final
Defeated Preston Lions 2-1 in Major Semi-Final
Lost 3-1 to Preston Lions in Grand Final

Top scorer in 2007:
Hamlet Armenian, 9 goals

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007:
Ross Antoniadis, 19 votes

Squad 2008
Kenny Gerihristodoulou
Mark Pistininzi
John Angelovski
Ross Antoniadis
Greg Lombardo
James Sherman
Jerry Karpeh (from Perth Glory, WA)
Goran Talevski (from Altona Magic)
Mark Vazocchi (from Fawkner Blues)
Steve Martin
Robbie Simeoni (from Richmond Eagles)
Seb Petrovic (from Heidelberg United)
Junior Melo (from Brazil)
Ryan O'Hare (from Brunswick City)
Anthony Colossimo
Conner Molan (from Ireland)
Anton Vulic (from Kingston City)
Simon Colossimo

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Melbourne Knights

GLORY DAYS SET FOR SOMERS ST

Knights ready to challenge

Following a successful 2007 season, the Melbourne Knights will no doubt be looking to go one step better in 2008's edition of the Foxtel Cup.

The Knights have signaled their intentions with several key signings to date, and if pre-season form is anything to go by, fans can expect a top six finish at the very least from the red, white and blues.

Coach Chris Taylor will be under no illusions from his ambitious Chairman Matt Tomas to bring home a championship, the first in 12 seasons (they last tasted success in 1995/96 in the old NSL).

With the likes of Adrian Cagalj (Oakleigh) and Hrvoje Matkovic (Preston) moving to fellow VPL sides, the Knights will be looking to some key new signings to bolster an already impressive squad. Defender Neven Antic returns from a stint in Greece, as does striker Andrew Barisic, who returned from a season in German football.

Up front, Taylor will have an abundance of talent with veteran Joe Spiteri, new signing Zoran Petrevski, deep lying attacker Anthony Pelikan and Barisic all staking a claim to be part of the first eleven in round one.

At the other end, former Preston keeper Savaas Ozdemir and former Green Gully keeper Ante Loncaric will battle for the number one jersey following the departure of experienced custodian Adrian Cagalj. Both keepers are 20 years old and will be looking to cement their place in the senior side this season.

In midfield, Taylor will be ruing the departure of dynamic attacking midfielders Mate Dugandzic and Daniel Visevic. A successful trial period with Croatian first division club Dinamo Zagreb means that the youngsters will no longer be available to Taylor, which considering their impact last year, is a massive loss.

Taylor will however be able to call on the services of Marko Kuna, who has shown potential since moving from Croatia last year. Kuna will compete for a place in a midfield that feature Cameron Watson, Stefan Piorkowski, Alex Kiratzoglou, Anthony Pelikan and a rejuvenated Dario Matkovic, who seems to be over the health problems that hampered his form last year.

Pre season form has been excellent for the Knights, with wins over Preston, Green Gully and Whittlesea providing warning alarms for the rest of the 13 teams in the competition. Goals have been free flowing and the team is looking settled and ready to go, this despite having a late start to pre-season training due to board issues.

Behind the scenes, a new pitch has been laid for the new season, and some renovation work will only add to the cozy atmosphere at Knights stadium, which will also be the home of newly promoted club Coburg United.

Prediction – Expect a top two finish from the Knights, who will be under no illusions that only a championship win will do for their demanding supporters and committee.

By Josip Loncaric

Photos by Steve Starek

The ever reliable Tommy Milardovic will be there for the Knights punch for punch until October.

In most peoples books the Knights are one of the favourites to be near the top of the league come October. However, it will have to get used to life without Daniel Visevic who has left for Europe..

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS FAST FACTS

Formed: 1953

President: Stan Bilic

Captain: TBC

Coach: Chris Taylor

Ground address:
Knights Stadium, Somers Street, Sunshine Mel: 27-A6

VPL championships:
(3) 1979, 1978, 1968

Final position in 2007: 2nd

Top Six series:
Lost 1-0 to Preston Lions in Qualifying Final
Defeated Oakleigh Cannons 1-0 in Minor Semi-Final
Lost 2-1 to Preston Lions in Preliminary Final

Top Scorer in 2007:
Anthony Pelikan, 13 goals

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007:
Stefan Piorkowski, 16 votes

SQUAD 2008
Savas Ozdemir (from Lions)
Tommy Milardovic
Stev Iosifidis
Ivan Franjic
Matt Grbesa
Dale Thompson (from youth)
Max Cuze (from St Albans)
Stefan Piorkowski
Anthony Pelikan
Craig Elvin
Cameron Watson
Dario Matkovic
Marko Kuni (from Croatia)
Alex Kiratzoglou
James Tennant (from Ireland)
Joe Spiteri
Andrew Baresic (returns from Germany)
Andrew Zahra (from youth)
Zoran Petrevski from Qld Roar
Mio Mirenkovic (from Nth Geelong)
Ante Loncaric (from Green Gully)

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Oakleigh Cannons

CANNONS EQUIP FOR SHOWDOWN

Munro recruits new arsenal

Stuart Munro begins his third season in charge at Jack Edwards which in Victorian Premier League coaching terms is roughly the equivalent of Sir Alex Ferguson's long reign at Manchester United. It is an achievement matched by just two other coaches in the Victorian Premier League: Ian Dobson at Gully and John Anastasiadis at South.

Munro has taken the Cannons into the finals in each of his three seasons, however a lack of finals' success together with budget cuts has prompted an exodus of older players and a move towards youth at the club. Defenders Felix Rosman, Adam Ewin, midfielders Scott Webster, Bill Damianos and Scott MacNicol as well as striker Juan Nilo are the only players remaining from last season's squad.

Munro says of his new squad, "Lots of new faces, a lot younger apart from Stelios (Drakos) and Bojo (Jevdjevic) who've been signed as key defenders. Everybody else is fairly young. That's what the club wants, that's the direction we want to take it. The move of getting the younger players was obviously to fit the budget requirements of this year."

Munro is quick to add that he's comfortable with the squad despite the loss of experienced players, including three key defenders. Fans can expect to see a drastic revamp at the back with new keeper Jevdjevic arriving from Altona Magic, the Drakos brothers from Whittlesea Zebras and Jonathan Munoz from Preston Lions. Most of the other recruits are young players and they include ex-Zebras striker Tex Apostolikas who Cannon fans will be hoping can forge a successful attacking partnership with Nilo.

Trent Waterson and Sam DeVito come across from South, whilst Igor Kraphko from Western Suburbs and Milos Lujic (AIS) add a further injection of youth.

According to Munro, the limited availability of a full size pitch to train on due to water restrictions has prompted the club take on a few extra pre-season friendlies. " It's been difficult, the preseason, but the guys are coming together quite well."

Asked about the style of football fans can expect to see from this side, Munro replies,

"How we play will depend on a large part on the state of our home pitch. You can't expect people to be a ball playing team if the pitch is absolutely shocking. We still want to play the ball and keep possession of the ball."

Munro believes his biggest challenge will be to get a consistent performance from his younger players. "If we can get a consistent performance and avoid major injuries to key players, then I expect to gain a top four or five position in the league without a shadow of a doubt. I'm confident we've got a strong enough squad to be competing in the top end of the league."

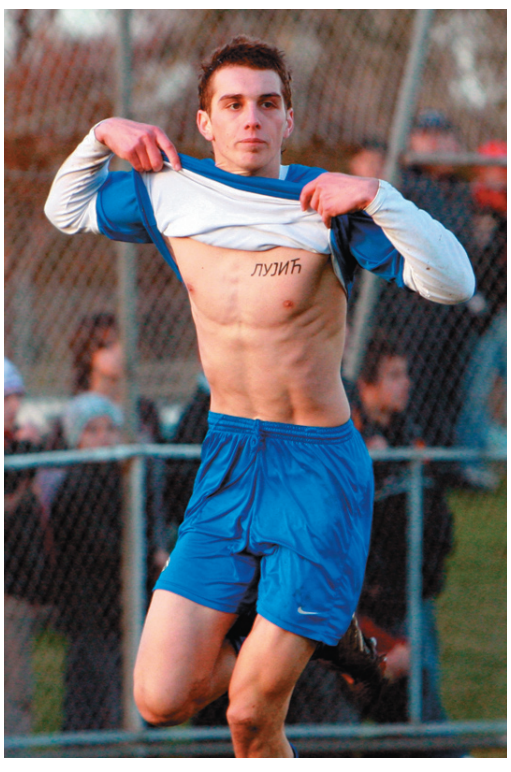
One of Munro's young charges this season will be ex AIS player Milos Lujic, the son of former Footscray Just star Zdravko Lujic. Munro describes Milos as "a terrific talent, a tall lad with a lovely touch. He's already been training with Melboune Victory."

However Munro is realistic about the prospect of Lujic seeing out the season with the Cannons.

" I think he'll be snapped up by an A-League club which isn't good for us. That's probably the one negative if you can call it a negative that we're trying to bring young players into the squad- is the fact that if they do well-you're not going to keep them for very long. The higher leagues will snap them up or they'll go overseas. Sometimes you're better off with a team of older age players, because they're not going to go anywhere."

By George Stogiannou

Photos by John Punshon



After impressing with the AIS last year Milos Lujic has been snapped up by Oakleigh Cannons - a move that would surely put some hair on his chest!

Juan Nilo and Bill Damianos share a joke in the dressing rooms at Jack Edwards Reserve. Of course, the Cannons' Foxtel Cup aspirations will be no laughing matter once the fun and games begin.

OAKLEIGH CANNONS FAST FACTS

Formed: 1972

President: Stan Papayianneris

Captain: Felix Rosman

Coach: Stuart Munro

Ground address:
Jack Edwards Reserve, Oakleigh, Mel: 69-H9

VPL championships: None

Final position in 2007: 5th

Top Six Series:
Defeated Altona Magic 1-0 in Elimination Final
Lost 1-0 to Melbourne Knights in Minor Semi-Final

Top Scorer in 2007:
Esala Masi, 15 goals
(VPL Top Scorer 2007)

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007:
Marcus Stergiopoulos, 19 votes

SQUAD 2008
ADRIAN CAGALJ (from Knights)
FELIX ROSMAN
STELIOS DRAKOS (from Zebras)
JONATHAN MUNOZ (from Preston)
ADAM EWIN
ARI DRAKOS (from Zebras)
MATTY FOSCHINI
SAMMY DE VITO (from South Melb)
SCOTT WEBSTER
BILL DAMIANOS
FRANKIE LAGANA (from Royals)
SCOTT MACNICOL
STUART KELLY (from Cantebury, NZ)
TRENT WATERSON (from South)
RAMSEY NASSER (from Doncaster Rovers)
JUAN NILO
TAXIARHIS APOSTOLIKAS (from Zebras)
MILOS LUJIC (from AIS)
IHOR KHRAPKO (from Western Suburbs)
DEAN PANAGOPOULOS
ARTHUR PAPADOPOULOS
DAVID BRAY

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Green Gully Cavaliers

GULLY IN MOOD FOR TITLE TILT

Dobson prepares troops

For the past two seasons the Cavaliers have finished Foxtel Cup campaigns in 6th place, losing in the first elimination week of the finals series.

However the two seasons could not be any different. Mid-season 2006, Green Gully looked to be out of sorts with a premiership hangover, destined for relegation having hit rock bottom of the league standings after losing 4-3 to Richmond in an apparent relegation battle.

The miracle turn around in fortune saw the Cavaliers climb out of trouble and snatch a finals place on the final day of the regular season. Mid-season 2007, Green Gully looked to be heading for another premiership. Top of the table, having demolished the usually competitve Altona Magic 5-1. Injuries, suspensions and basic poor form saw the hopes of the Cavaliers fizzle out.

Coaching staff, club officials and members will be hoping that in 2008, the Cavaliers can string together their form across the whole season. In doing so, Green Gully has recruited well to increase the depth of talent in its senior team. Steven Tilovski, the 2007 Victorian Goalkeeper Of The Year, was a high profile transfer from Fawkner. Next in line, were the Delev brothers (Koce & Kole) from Altona Magic.

Further signings include Steve Burton from Richmond, aswell as a reserve goalkeeper from Cameroon. Sporting visa players John Adam and Kristijan Ivesic have looked impressive during pre-season, will be looking to get noticed by A-League clubs in their second season for Green Gully.

The Cavaliers are also in negotiation for new sporting visa player, a striker from Brazil. The club has parted ways with goalkeeper Thomas Kovar, midfielder Marcelo Pena and defender Stephen Camilleri.

Pre-season results have been up and down, however not much is to be read from the practice matches, as coach Ian Dobson has been keen to give eager trialists as much playing time as possible, nor have pre-season results ever been an indication of a team's level of success in the season ahead.

First up for the Cavaliers, is an away trip to Altona, the Gully boys should be confident of a solid start and be wanting to improve to the heights of their premiership year in 2005.

By Markian Jaworsky

Photos by John Punshon

Talented Cavaliers forward Joel Nikolic

Gully's new 'keeper Steve Tilovski

New Zealand international Campbell Banks

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS FAST FACTS

Formed: 1955

President: Charles Farrugia

Captain: Dean Fak

Coach: Ian Dobson

Ground address:
Green Gully Reserve, Green Gully
Mel: 14-E8

VPL championships:
(7) 2005, 2003, 2000, 1999, 1983, 1982, 1981

Final position in 2007: 6th

Top Six Series:
Lost 2-1 to Whittlesea Zebras in Elimination Final

Top Scorer in 2007:
Joel Nikolic, 8 goals

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007: J eff Fleming, 15 votes

Squad 2008
John Adam
Campbell Banks
Aziz Behic
Steve Burton (from Richmond Eagles)
Kole Delev (from Altona Magic)
Koce Delev (from Altona Magic)
Dean Fak
Jeffrey Fleming
Kristian Ivesic
Mile Medjedovic
Manny Muscat
Dragi Nastevski
Joel Nikolic
Patrick N'Dongo (from Richmond Eagles)
Ryan Ollerton
Phil Riccobene
Matthew Sanders
Steven Tilovski (from Fawkner Blues)
Andy Vargas

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Altona Magic

TORTEVSKI WAVES MAGIC WAND

Paisley Park off-season clearout

Altona Magic will be looking to go all the way in 2008 as the new Victorian Premier League season kicks off this weekend.

Despite finishing just two points behind eventual premiers Preston Lions, the Magic were knocked out in the first round of the finals series by the Oakleigh Cannons.

Altona suffered from inconsistent performances in the middle of last season, where three consecutive losses, including a 5-1 thumping by Green Gully, threatened to ruin their finals hopes.

Coach Vlado Tortevski has rung in the changes in the off season, bringing in no less than ten players, although the club has lost experienced goalkeeper Bojo Jevdjevic and 2006 Top Scorer and Gold Medalist, Sash Becvinovski.

Also, Fidell Richards has moved to newly promoted Coburg United, while twin brothers Koce and Kole Delev have made the switch to Green Gully.

Another big loss for the club will be winger Daniel Vasilevski who signed with the Melbourne Victory and appeared in the latest version of the A-League, but Tortevski said the changes won't affect the team too much.

"Obviously we've lost a few boys from last season but we've signed five or six good players as well," he said.

"They are fitting in well and should be good replacements for the boys we've lost."

The Magic scored the least goals of any top six side last year, and Tortevski has moved to rectify this problem, signing Solomon Islands striker Henry Fa'arodo from Richmond.

Altona have also strengthened their midfield brigade, signing Nick Kalmar from Sunshine, former Melbourne Victory player Carl Recchia from Fawkner and former Preston Lions captain Pece Siveski.

Defence was the cornerstone of the Magic's game last year, with the side conceding just 34 goals for the season.

Goalkeeper Peter Zois has been signed from Dutch side Willem II to replace Jevdjevic, while former Essendon Royals captain Con Anthopoulos and Oakleigh's Steve Laurie have been brought in to bolster the defensive ranks.

The Magic have been a constant presence in the finals over the last few years and 2008 promises to be no different.

However, goals will still be a major concern for the club. Altona have only two players who scored more than three goals in 2007.

Michael Curcija is a proven goalscorer in the Victorian Premier League, having been top scorer in 2005 and second in 2006 but he cannot do it alone.

Fa'arodo should provide good cover for Becvinovski, but the more goals will nee to come from midfield players like Sash Aleksovski and Carl Recchia if Altona are to go all the way.

But Tortevski believes that it will be a more attacking Altona which will challenge for the title this year.

"Altona is a club which is always looking to win so that is our aim of course," said Tortevski.

"Not much will change from last season in terms of our system, but we will try to push forward and be more offensive to create more scoring opportunities," he said.

By Sebastian Kipman

Photos by Daniel Flis

ALTONA MAGIC FAST FACTS

Formed: 1975

President: Melissa Fischer-Massa

Captain: Steven Mrkela

Coach: Vlado Tortevski

Ground address:
Paisley Park Soccer Complex, Altona
Mel: 55-C5

VPL championships: (3) 1995,1996, 1997

Final position in 2007: 4th

Top Six Series:
Lost 1-0 to Oakleigh Cannons in Elimination Final

Top Scorer in 2007:
Michael Curcija, 12 goals

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007:Levent Osman, 17 votes

SQUAD 2008
Peter Zois (from Holland)
Kieran McDowell
Con Anthopoulos (from Royals)
Steve Laurie (from Oakleigh)
Slave Bozinovski
Stiven Mrkela
Agim Sherifovski
Pece Cergovski
Todd McSorley (from Modbury, SA)
Doug Mladenovic
Pece Siveski (from Lions
Carl Recchia (from Blues)
Henry Fa'arodo (from Eagles)
Michael Curcija
Miro Velickovski
George Lambadaridis
Joseph Konyit (from Knights)
Chris Raickovski (from Thomastown)
Craig Sweeney (from SGX)

Former Melbourne Victory player Carl Recchia makes the switch from Fawkner Blues to Altona for *VPL Version X.*

Altona Magic's dependable servant Levent Osman will once again be chasing honours with the Paisley Park outfit.

Soloman Island international Henry Fa'arodo is another of Tortevski's summer recruits .

South Melbourne

SOUTH FANS DEMAND SUCCESS

Johhny A celebrates milestone

After the disappointment of missing the finals in 2007, the South Melbourne Football Club are adamant that season 2008 will be a competitive season, which will hopefully see the club back in finals action and pushing for another VPL championship, to satisfy its large supporter base.

South has retained coach John Anastasiadis for the upcoming season, with the former PAOK and South star signing a 1 year contract extension. This coming season will be Anastasiadis' fourth consecutive season in charge at Bob Jane Stadium. With all things going well, the round 16 fixture at Western Suburbs will be Anastasiadis' 100th game in charge for the mighty blue and whites, a feat that only Manny Poulakakis, John Margaritis and Ange Postecoglou have managed to achieve in the past.

In what was a problem area for the club in 2007, the goalkeeping position will be filled in 2008 by the experienced Dean Anastasiads, after Mitchell Langerak's loan deal from the Melbourne Victory expired. A former NSL championship winner and dual VPL keeper of the year in 2005 and 2006, Anastasiadis has recovered from knee surgery and has once again put his hand up to be the number one keeper at lakeside. 'Deano' as he is affectionately known, will be entering his 9th season with South Melbourne, having begun at the club back in the 1992/93 NSL season. Anastasiadis will have youngster Mladen Tosic as his back-up, with the inexperienced young goalkeeper impressing during the numerous friendlies played across the summer break.

Defensively, South has made a concerted effort during the off-season to bolster a defensive unit that struggled in 2007. Rejoining the club are former players Steven O'Dor and Sam Poutakidis, who will undoubtedly provide experience to a defence that leaked 33 goals last season. Also joining will be Shane Nunes from Western Australia, being regarded as the best central defenders in the Western Australian Premier League. Combining with Ramazan Tavcancioglou and Adam Van Dommelle, these four signings will be a part of what is considered to be a super defensive unit.

In midfield the club will once again rely on Fernando De Moraes and Gianni De Nittis, whilst also having the likes of Bill Natsioulas and Yusuf Yusuf being able to slot into the wing positions comfortably. With the loss of Tansel Baser to Coburg and Trent Waterson to Oakleigh, the midfield quartet will be expected to - and must - step up to ensure South sees finals action. New signings Hamlet Armenian and Goran Zoric will also be expected to use their speed, endurance and work ethic down the left and right hand flanks. South has done extremely well to acquire these two attacking players, as they both played integral parts in the Victorian State Squad of 2007 and for their old clubs Whittlesea Zebras and Springvale White Eagles respectively.

Up front, South will rely on the services of Nathan Caldwell and Ricky Diaco. Both players have a proven goalscoring record in the Foxtel Cup and both have the ablity to torment defences on their day. If the midfielders can combine well with the forwards then South fans can look forward to some exciting attacking football.

John Anastasiadis was quite optimistic about the upcoming season, with the South great claiming that "we have all the players in place now and we really need to be switched on from round 1 and get points on the board early. I feel as though we have a great blend of experience and youth and can match it with any team in the competition, so fingers crossed we can play to our potential and give the league a shake this year."

South opens the season away to arch rivals Heidelberg in Round 1, with their first home game being against Coburg at Bob Jane Stadium in round 2.

By George Kouroumalis

& John Kyrou

Ricky Diaco

Hamlet Armenian joins South from the Zebras.

John Anastasiadis needs to find that winning feeling again with his troops at Bob Jane.

SOUTH MELBOURNE FAST FACTS

Formed: 1959

President: Leo Athanasakis

Captain: Dean Anastasiadis

Coach: John Anastasiadis

Ground address:
Bob Jane Stadium, Albert Park,
Mel: 2K-F6

VPL championships:
(8) 2006, 1976, 1974, 1972, 1966, 1965, 1964, 1962

Final position in 2007: 7th

Top scorer in 2007:
Ricky Diaco, 10 goals

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007:
Rama Tavsancioglu, 26 votes

SQUAD 2008
Dean Anastasiadis
Hamlet Armenian (from Zebras)
Andrew Bourakis
Con Blatsis
Nathan Caldwell
Nicholas Curtis
Fernando De Moraes
Gianni De Nittis
Nick Jelic (from Fairfield Bulls, NSW)
Shane Nunez (from WA)
Ricky Diaco
Tony Laverde (from Royals)
Bill Natsioulas
Steven O'dor
Rama Tavsancioglu
Mladen Tosic
Yusef Yusef
Adam Van Dommelle
Goran Zoric (from SWE)

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Heidelberg United

BERGERS HUNGRY FOR SUCCESS

Jubilee year for the Village

Heidelberg United come into this year's Foxtel Cup ready to take up the fight for some long overdue silverware.

Coinciding with the VPL's Jubilee anniversary, this year marks a major milestone for the former National League club as it also celebrate 50 years of existence and the Bergers will certainly be looking to celebrate their birthday in style.

The Bergers will once again field a very competitive squad for the 2008 Foxtel Cup. Their squad on paper looks strong, with only a few major losses. They have maintained most of their backline while picking up a few players to add some more firepower this season.

Players of the calibre of Josip Kozic (Zebras), Mark Tsiorlas (Fawkner) and former Grimbsy Town and Richmond stalwart Graham Hockless will be wearing black and yellow in 2008. Eric Vasiiliadis also returns to his old club whilst former NSL player Denis Alilovic joins the Bergers from Rockdale City Suns in the NSWPL.

Some would put the Bergers up there as real contenders for this year's Foxtel Cup but their coach George Katsakis is taking a more cautious approach saying that "we are aiming for a top 4 finish."

When asked if the Heidelberg had what it takes to win the title he said, "it's too early to tell, I don't want to speak so early, as you know we could have a few injuries and luck go against us".

Though having a strong team on paper never guarantees success as seen in season 2007 which saw the Bergers finish a disappointing 8th. Katsakis believes that last season was due to off-field dramas in the boardroom and financial issues within the club that had a flow on effect to the team on the pitch.

This leads to the next question - will these same issues pop up again in 2008 and disrupt the Bergers season? This reporter was already hearing rumours of off-field issues down at the Village but Katsakis denied any problems and stated that "these rumours have no substance at all...we haven't been in such a strong financial position in years".

With that said it looks like a big year ahead for the Bergers. Katsakis believes that Alilovich and Tsiorlas will be the key to the Bergers prospects this year, stating that poor finishing cost them dearly in 2007.

So far the pre-season has looked promising with an appearence in the Hellenic Cup final appearence against Oakleigh last Saturday the 9th of February. The Bergers kick off their season in the traditional derby against age old rivals South Melbourne at home at Olympic Village.

When asked why the derby has died off the last few years Katsakis believed that "the older generation are dying off while the younger generation and more interest in the new A-League", but he believed that if we could turn the game into a spectacle then it would bring some of the fans back to support the once mighty Heidelberg United.

Last year saw the Bergers defeat South Melbourne 3-0 at the Village and a result like that would surely please its legion of fans, including the fanatic supporter who runs up and down the sideline barking instructions to his boys, - indeed, no one would love to witness a long awaited Berger triumph in 2008 more than him!

TRIUMPH FOR BERGERS

Heidelberg United completed a unique double on the weekend when both its Men's and Women's teams took out the Hellenic Cup. The boys beat Oakleigh Cannons by 2-0, while the girls conquered South Melbourne in a penalty shoot-out by 7-6 after the scores were locked 00- at full-time.

By Michal Skrodsky
Photos by John Punshon

Veteran Robert Liparoti (left) prepares for another season of holding the backline together at Olympic Village and will rely on support from the ever present midfielder Jimmy Drossos (above).

HEIDELBERG UNITED FAST FACTS

Formed: 1958

President: Nick Katsakis

Captain: Tony Ouliaris

Coach: George Katsakis

Ground address:
Olympic Park (Village), Heidelberg West
Mel: 19-D11

VPL championships:
(4) 2001, 1990, 1988, 1975

Final position in 2007: 8th

Top Scorer in 2007:
Nick Marinos, 6 goals

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007:
Robert Liparoti, 9 votes

SQUAD 2008
Denis Alilovic (from Rockdale City, NSW)
Saso Alexovski
Emir Ameti
Robert Dolevski
Jim Drossos
Peter Gavalas
Graham Hockless (from Richmond Eagles)
Josip Kozic (from Whittlesea Zebras)
Daniel Jones
Robert Liparoti
Tony Ouliaris
Tim Paton
Peter Roberts
Marko Sutalo (from Essendon Royals)
James Stefanou (from South Melb)
Mark Tsiorlas (from Fawkner Blues)
Eric Vassiliadis (from Zebras)

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Western Suburbs

‘BURBS TO PROVE ‘07 WAS NO FLUKE

Looking for life after Chatz

Exceeding all expectations last season, the Western Suburbs Soccer Club will be wary of second season blues after comfortably avoiding the drop back to State League One football after securing promotion in 2006.

Under the expert guidance of hard taskmaster Michael Chatzitrifonas and his assistant Robert Marinkovic, Western Suburbs provided the fairytale of the season by gallantly fighting off the dreaded bottom four and finishing in a respectable league position.

Season 2008 brings about a different proposition for new coach Kon Pappas, who takes over from the man known as Chatz (Chatzitrifonas), who has moved to the Richmond Eagles for the new season. Joining Pappas on the bench will be Theo Constantinou, who retired last year after a distinguished career at the Bentleigh Greens.

Pappas’ task wasn’t made easy as several key departures ensured that recruitment was very much required in order to re-build a competitive side for another predicted relegation battle. Club captain Tom Markovski finally decided to hang up the boots at the tender age of 40, whilst Billy Daglis, Zoran Cvetkovski, Leandro Rizzo, Ricardo Castro, James Stefanou, Anthony Maslic and Daniel Neesham have all moved on from the club. Add to this the loss of Igor Khrapko, who surprised the club by opting to sign for Oakleigh midway through the pre season campaign.

In response, Pappas and the club were quick to snap up Arthur Tsonis (South Melbourne), Evan Karavitis (Fawkner), Ivan Razov (Altona Magic), Tomi Razov (St. Albans Saints) and Milan Batur (Melbourne Knights), before adding French midfielder Jean Devoreu and experienced former Perth Glory striker Vas Kalogererakos to their final list this season.

Pappas and Contstantinou will no doubt be looking towards experienced midfield duo Lorenz Kindtner and Terry Antoniadis to lead a team that has the potential to once again be successful in their desire to avoid the drop. A tough backline consisting of keeper Stjepan Gal in goal, Eddie Cetkin, Johnny Cvetanovski, Nikola Raoma and new signings Tsonis and Batur will be the key to Suburbs once more, and if the clean sheets are regular, then Pappas and co. can expect to pinch priceless points, particularly at their compact Ralph reserve home pitch.

Pre season results have been mixed for Subrubs, with an early win against Richmond and a creditable draw with Altona Magic, before some comprehensive wins against sub-standard competition in the early rounds of the Hellenic Cup. A loss to Heidelberg in the semi finals suggests that there is work to be done to compete with the top sides, but Suburbs’ fighting spirit may well be as good as an extra player on the pitch.

According to Pappas, the challenge is there for himself and his side. “We have finalized our squad and we are getting closer to having our first eleven sorted for round one. I would like to think that we can have the same success as last year and finish well outside the relegation zone, maybe even push for the top six”, an ambitious Pappas said.

Prediction – Another tough season filled with ups and downs, but the players will give that little bit extra, considering that club legend Lorenz Kindtner will finish his illustrious career at the end of the season.

By Josip Loncaric

Photos by Daniel Flis

Nikola Raoma

Chatz has gone as so too has veteran Tommy markovski. New coach Con Pappas will hope to inject some new blood at Ralph Reserve and build on last season.

WESTERN SUBURBS FAST FACTS

Formed: 1965

President: Jim Condilis

Captain: Terry Antoniadis

Coach: Con Pappas

Ground address:
Ralph Reserve, Sunshine
Mel: 40-A2

VPL championships: None

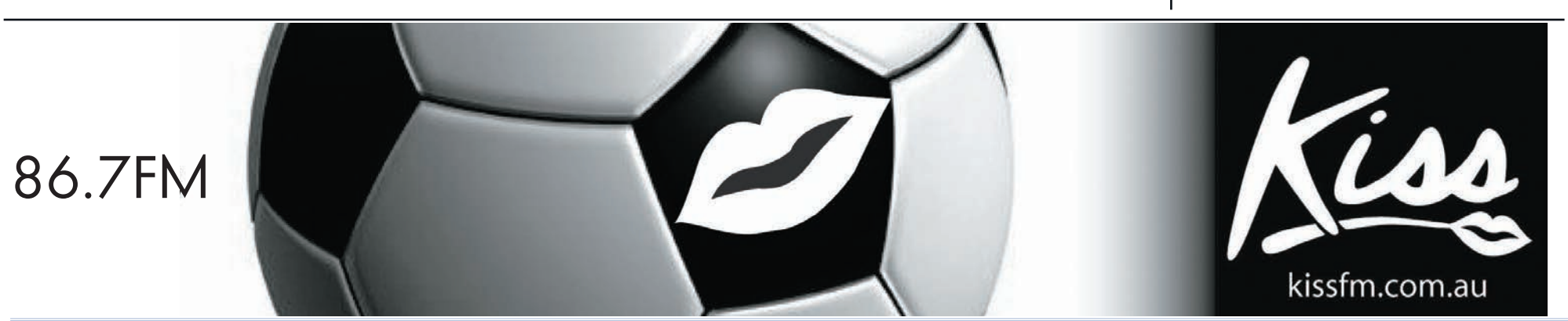
Final position in 2007: 9th

Top scorer in 2007:
Leandro Rizzo, 6 goals

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007:
Terry Antoniadis 30 votes (Winner)

SQUAD 2008

Evan Karavitis (from Blues)
Arthur Tsonis (from South)
Ivan Razov (from Magic)
Tommy Ravoz (from Knights)
Lorenz Kindter
Terry Antniadis
Con Tsioukis (from Greece)
Nikola Raoma
Dimi Hatzimouratis
Billy Sianidis
Stepjan Gal
Vas Kalogeracos (from WA)
Jean Javary from (from France)
Davo Baresic (from Knights)
Eddie Cetkin
Craig Brown
Reno Damianos
Adam Adamitis
Goran Petrovski



Richmond Eagles

EAGLES VOW TO MAKE '08 GREAT

Chatz won't tolerate passengers

The 2008 season sees Richmond compete in the Foxtel Cup for the third successive campaign, a highpoint for the club following two single season spells in the old State League during the halcyon days of the early 1960's.

Also for the third season in succession, a new coach will steer the side with Michael Chatzitrifonas taking the reins after two successful years with Western Suburbs. He has brought in Robert Marinkovic as his assistant as the club looks to improve on a disappointing effort in 2007.

After a promising start, a 4-1 win over the previously unbeaten Oakleigh Cannons at the end of April saw the Eagles reach the unprecedented heights of third place on the table. Coach Phil Stubbins soon departed for the A-League when appointed assistant to Aurelio Vidmar at Adelaide United and the mid-season upheaval saw patchy form lead to the side slipping outside the Top Six. New mentor Doug Hodgson would have hoped the 7-0 defeat of Springvale White Eagles would have heralded a revival, but the resulting five defeats on the trot saw the club embroiled in the thick of the relegation battle.

The run of losses was broken with a scoreless draw at Heidelberg United before Craig McIlwain's header earned a 1-0 win at home to Altona Magic in the penultimate round of the season. This meant a draw in the final round against an injury and suspension ravaged Sunshine Georgies would be enough to ensue survival. Xhezair Sulemani gave the Eagles an early goal as Joey Di Iorio inspired them to an 8-0 romp.

Early off-season departures included Marco Kuck to Vietnam, Steve Burton to Green Gully, Craig McIlwain to Nuneaton Borough, Ben Watson to Casey Comets, Henry Fa'arodo to Altona Magic and Graham Hockless to Heidelberg United. Recently Di Iorio has joined a former club in Dandenong Thunder.

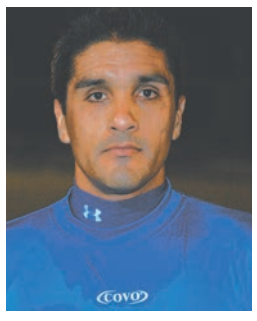
Joining the squad are former NSL leading goalscorer Pablo Cardozo, George Goutzioulis, an NSL Champion with South Melbourne, and former New Zealand international Aaran Lines. Antun Kovacic, with NSL and A-League experience was signed from Oakleigh Cannons. Dimitri Tsiaras and Chris Greechan were picked up from relegated Kingston City. Noel Bahnsen returns after a spell with Bentleigh Greens and Jesse Krncevic, who scored four goals in five games in 2007, is back for a full season. Zoran Cvetkovski and Daniel Neesham have followed the coaching staff from Western Suburbs to Richmond. Exciting youngster Richie Cardozo has also joined the club as it hopes to form a potent strikeforce.

The club's first VPL season saw the side sit in the relegation places for much of the season before a rally with the appointment of Stubbins leading to it just missing a finals berth. In contrast the next year saw a reasonable start disintegrate into a flirtation with relegation. What does 2008 in have in store for the team from Kevin Bartlett Reserve? There is certainly enough quality within the squad to be a top half of the table team. Given past history the club could cover both ends of the spectrum once again, but you would suspect consolidating a place in the league was at the bottom end of their ambitions.

By Mark Boric

Photos by Daniel Flis

Mike Chatzitrifonas worked wonders with Western Suburbs last year and now takes over at the Eagles.



Former NSL star Pablo Cardozo makes the move from the Cannons to the Eagles.

Richmond Eagles will no doubt be hoping to avoid a repeat of last season's final day dramas and will be looking to Jesse Krncevic to spearhead the attack.

RICHMOND EAGLES FAST FACTS

Formed: 1954

President: Helmut Kalitzki

Captain: Stuart McCluskey

Coach: Michael Chatzitrifonas

Ground address: Kevin Bartlett Reserve, Richmond, Mel: 59-A1

VPL championships: None

Final position in 2007: 9th

Top Scorer in 2007: Henry Fa'arodo, 7 goals

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007: Graham Hockless, 23 votes

SQUAD 2008

Noel Bahnsen
Pablo Cardozo (from Oakleigh Cannons)
Ritchie Cardozo (from FC Bex, Switzerland)
Michael Catalano (from Essendon Royals)
Zoran Cvetkovski (from Western Suburbs)
George Goutzioulis (from Heidelberg United)
Chris Greechan (from Kingston City)
Nick Kalambokis
James Kalifatidis
Antun Kovacic (from Oakleigh Cannons)
Jesse Krncevic
Aaran Lines (from Rochester Rhinos, USA)
Stuart McCluskey
Daniel Neesham (from Western Suburbs)
Shane Rexhepi
Semir Sivic
Xhezair Sulemani
Dimitri Tsiaras (from Kingston City)
Andrew Viola (from Bulleen Zebras)
Simon Webster
Stuart Webster

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TONY STERJOVSKI

PRESTON LIONS FC

FULL NAME: Tony Sterjovski
BIRTHPLACE: Melbourne VIC
BIRTH DATE: 11/12/1977
HEIGHT: 175cm
WEIGHT: 72kg
MARRIED: Yes
CAR: Commodore VX
OCCUPATION OUTSIDE OF FOOTBALL: Despatch
NICKNAME: British/Sterj
PREVIOUS CLUBS: VIS, Fawkner Blues and Tennis Borussia - Berlin
REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS: Victorian State Team at Junior and Senior Level
CHILDHOOD FOOTBALL HERO: Pele
FAVOURITE O/S PLAYER: Ronaldo and Robinho
FAVOURITE V-LEAGUE PLAYER: Les Anastasiou
FAVOURITE FORMER SOCCEROO: John Markovski
FAVOURITE CURRENT SOCCEROO: Harry Kewell
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A PLAYER: 2007 Grand Final
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A FAN: Australia V's Uraguay
MOST MEMORABLE GOAL YOU'VE SCORED: Every goal is a memorable one
FUNNIEST MOMENT IN FOOTBALL: Last year with Preston we were banned from eating pumpkin seeds during our warm up. One of the boys placed a handful in his mouth and got caught and almost chocked.
BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT: Not winning the championship in 2002
WORST INJURY: None
MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENT: Izzy
FAVOURITE AWAY GROUND: Epping Stadium
SUPERSTITIONS: I always wear the same pair of socks underneath my playing socks
TYPICAL MATCH DAY MEAL: Pasta
WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS: Crossing and dribbling
WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES: My right foot
FAVOURITE TEAM WHEN GROWING UP: Manchester United
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTS:. Golf and Table Tennis
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTSPERSON: Roger Federa
FAVOURITE FOODS: Seafood, Steak and Nachos
FAVOURITE ACTOR/ACTRESS: Morgan Freeman
HOBBIES: Fishing and Golf
FAVOURITE HOLIDAY RESORT: Mallorca-Spain
FAVOURITE NIGHTSPOT: The local Pub
IDEAL DATE: Jessica Alba
FAVOURITE TV SHOWS: Friends
FAVOURITE MUSIC: Golden Oldies
FAVOURITE FILM: The Shawshank Redemption
LAST SOCCER SHIRT YOU BOUGHT: Never bought one
FUNNIEST RUMOUR YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT YOURSELF: .....havent heard one!
BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON CAREER: My biggest influence will have to be my Grandfather and my dad.
BIGGEST DRAG IN SOCCER: Players who feign injury
FOOTBALL AMBITION: To play soccer for as long as I can to the best of my ability
WHICH PERSON IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET? : Ronaldo
YOUR TIP FOR THIS YEAR'S FOXTEL CUP: Altona Magic or Melbourne Knights

2007 Bill Feming Medalist Tony Sterjovski of Preston Lions holds off a challenge from Whittlesea Zebras' Kristian Rees during last year's Foxtel Cup Grand Final. Preston were victorious by 3-1 and were crowned champions of Victoria.

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Frankston Pines

PINES BACK IN THE BIG TIME

Frankston embarks on new era

Frankston Pines return to the Premier League this week with one intention, staying there. But a swag of new signings and a lot of work off the field may yet see the side surprise a few its northern knockers in 2008.

Football is absolutely booming on the Australian Rules centric Mornington Peninsula with clubs such as Mornington, and Baxter, who do not have State League seniors, fielding more than 500 juniors each across dozens of competitions.

Being the only Premier League club in the south east suburbs has obvious benefits for Pines and through its 18s and 21s sides, which they have spent the past two years building, they have began to tap this rich resource.

Naturally Pines retained division one winning coach Adam Jamieson and he has put his side through a typically grueling pre-season with the onus on running and more running.

The technically brilliant Willy Raines will return as Jamieson's assistant while Pines stalwart Cameron Leopold will remain as captain.

Goalkeeping coach Peter Blasby has made a welcome return to the club while Tom O'Halloran, the man largely responsible for whipping the 18s and 21s into shape, will continue his role with his assistant John Bruce.

Pines have retained about 90 per cent of its 2007 squad but its the quality of the other 10 per cent, including the Premier Leagues leading scorer, Esala Masi, that offers the peninsula side much hope for 2008.

Off the field Pines are in increasingly good shape with president Errol Mustafa shaping up for his second year at the helm.

Rather than celebrating Pines' return to the top flight Mustafa put his committee to work on a number of projects, including match lighting, which are now bearing fruit.

Once the lights are up and running Pines will play most if its home games under lights on a Friday night which will enable supporters from Casey, Langwarrin and other local clubs with ties to Pines to come along.

Love them or hate them, nobody can dispute the strength of Pines' defence having only conceded 10 goals in last years competition which included sides like Bentleigh Greens, Coburg and Southern Stars.

Crowd favourite Billy Armour will again pull on the boots this year as will Michael Anderson, Ross Duckworth and Trent Malcolm, giving the defence much needed consistency.

And if new signings such as former Joey's striker, Daniel Miller, and his former Whittlesea teammate, Adam Bajevic, are able to successfully merge into Jamieson's squad they will bolster Pines attacking stocks considerably.

Pines have also signed goalkeeper Nik Roganovic from Springvale White Eagles who is expected to share the position with veteran Brad Zealley.

With a new committee bedded down, the clubs books in the black and some well managed strategic signings, Pines could indeed be the bogey side as they were in 2003 when they last entered the Premier League and came perilously close to winning the grand final against Green Gully.

By Jason Gillick

Photos by Darryl Kennedy

Last year's VPL Top Goalscorer, Esala Masi, makes the switched from Oakleigh Cannons to the peninsula.

Cam Leopold will again captain the Pines and like the lad in the background will hope to show some cheek to its opponents in 2008.

Frankston Pines makes a quick return to the Foxtel Cup after clinching Division One honours last season. The club will be coached by Adam Jamieson (Back row, far left) and his tactically astute assistant coach, Willie Raynes (back row, far right).

Frankston Pines Fast Facts

Formed: 1965

President: Errol Mustafa

Captain: Cam Leopold

Coach: Adam Jamieson

Ground address:
Monterey Reserve, Frankston
Mel: 99-K8

VPL championships: None

Final position in 2007:
Division One Champions

Top scorer in 2007:
Cam Leopold, 9 goals

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007: N/A

Squad 2008
Adam Fadljevic (from Zebras)
Andrew Skeldar
Boris Ovcin
Brad Zealley
Cameron Jones
Cameron Leopold
Craig Metcalfe
Craig Smart
Daniel Miller (from Zebras)
Danny Black (from Dandenong Thunder)
Esala Masi (from Cannons)
James Reichwein (from Qld)
Leo Trebbia
Matt Morris-Thomas
Michael Anderson
Nick Waite
Nikola Roganovic (from White Eagles)
Ross Duckworth
Simon Mur (from Berwick City)
Thomas Sadd (from USA)
Trent Malcolm

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FOXTEL CUP
2008 FIXTURE LIST

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT

ROUND 1
Friday, 15 February 8:15PM **Richmond V Preston Lions** Kevin Bartlett Res
Saturday, 16 February 6:00PM Frankston Pines V Oakleigh Cannons Monterey Res
Saturday, 16 February 6:00PM Coburg United V Western Suburbs Knights Stdm
Saturday, 16 February 7:30PM Altona Magic V Green Gully Cavaliers Paisley Park Res
Sunday, 17 February 6:00PM Fawkner Blues V Melbourne Knights C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 17 February 6:00PM Heidelberg United V South Melbourne Olympic Park (Village)
Monday, 18 February 8:15PM Whittlesea Zebras V A.I.S. Epping Stdm

ROUND 2
Friday, 22 February 8:15PM Richmond V Green Gully Cavaliers Kevin Bartlett Res
Friday, 22 February 8:30PM Oakleigh Cannons V Heidelberg United Jack Edwards Res
Sunday, 24 February 6:00PM South MelMelbourne V Coburg United Bob Jane Stdm
Sunday, 24 February 6:00PM Melbourne Knights V Altona Magic Knights Stdm
Sunday, 24 February 6:00PM Preston Lions V Whittlesea Zebras BT Connor Res
Sunday, 24 February 6:00PM Western Suburbs V Fawkner Blues Ralph Res
Saturday, 23 or Sunday 24 February A.I.S. V Frankston Pines TBC *

ALTONA SOCCER CLUB Magic

ROUND 3
Friday, 29 February 8:15PM Richmond V Melbourne Knights Kevin Bartlett Res
Saturday, 29 February 6:00PM Frankston Pines V Preston Lions Monterey Res
Saturday, 1 March 6:00PM Coburg United V Oakleigh Cannons Knights Stdm
Saturday, 1 March 7:30PM Altona Magic V Fawkner Blues Paisley Park Res
Sunday, 2 March 5:00PM Heidelberg United V A.I.S. Olympic Park (Village)
Sunday, 2 March 6:00PM South Melbourne V Western Suburbs Bob Jane Stdm
Monday, 3 March 8:15PM Whittlesea Zebras V Green Gully Cavaliers Epping Stdm

ROUND 4
Friday, 7 March 8:30PM Oakleigh Cannons V South Melbourne Jack Edwards Res
Sunday, 9 March 5:00PM Fawkner Blues V Richmond C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 9 March 5:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V Frankston Pines Green Gully Res
Sunday, 9 March 5:00PM Melbourne Knights V Whittlesea Zebras Knights Stdm :
Sunday, 9 March 5:00PM Preston Lions V Heidelberg United BT Connor Res
Sunday, 9 March 5:00PM Western Suburbs V Altona Magic Ralph Res
Saturday, 8 or Sunday,9 March A.I.S. V Coburg United TBC *
Friday, 14 March 8:15PM Richmond V Altona Magic Kevin Bartlett Res

FAWKNER BLUES SOCCER CLUB

ROUND 5
Friday, 14 March 8:30PM Frankston Pines V Melbourne Knights Monterey Res
Friday, 14 March 8:30PM Oakleigh Cannons V Western Suburbs Jack Edwards Res
Saturday, 15 March 6:00PM Coburg United V Preston Lions Knights Stdm
Sunday, 16 March 5:00PM Heidelberg United V Green Gully Cavaliers Olympic Park (Village)
Monday, 17 March 8:15PM Whittlesea Zebras V Fawkner Blues Epping Stdm
Monday, 24 March (Easter Monday) 4:00PM South Melbourne V A.I.S. Bob Jane Stdm

ROUND 6
Saturday, 29 March 7:30PM Altona Magic V Whittlesea Zebras Paisley Park Res
Sunday, 30 March 3:00PM Fawkner Blues V Frankston Pines C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 30 March 3:00PM Melbourne Knights V Heidelberg United Knights Stdm
Sunday, 30 March 3:00PM Preston Lions V South Melbourne BT Connor Res
Sunday, 30 March 3:00PM Western Suburbs V Richmond Ralph Res
Sunday, 30 March 5:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V Coburg United Green Gully Res
Saturday, 29 or Sunday, 30 March A.I.S. V Oakleigh Cannons TBC *

Dressing room celebrations with the Zebras.

FRANKSTON PINES SOCCER CLUB

ROUND 7
Friday, 4 April 8:30PM Frankston Pines V Altona Magic Monterey Res
Saturday, 5 April 6:00PM Coburg United V Melbourne Knights Knights Stdm
Sunday, 6 April 3:00PM Oakleigh Cannons V Preston Lions Jack Edwards Res
Sunday, 6 April 3:00PM Heidelberg United V Fawkner Blues Olympic Park (Village)
Sunday, 6 April 4:00PM South Melbourne V Green Gully Cavaliers Bob Jane Stdm
Monday, 7 April 8:30PM Whittlesea Zebras V Richmond Epping Stdm
Saturday, 5 or Sunday, 6 April A.I.S. V Western Suburbs TBC *

ROUND 8
Friday, 11 April 8:30PM Richmond V Frankston Pines Kevin Bartlett Res
Saturday, 12 April 4:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V Oakleigh Cannons Green Gully Res
Saturday, 12 April 6:30PM Altona Magic V Heidelberg United Paisley Park Res
Sunday, 13 April 3:00PM Fawkner Blues V Coburg United C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 13 April 3:00PM Melbourne Knights V South Melbourne Knights Stdm
Sunday, 13 April 3:00PM Preston Lions V A.I.S. BT Connor Res
Sunday, 13 April 3:00PM Western Suburbs V Whittlesea Zebras Ralph Res

GREEN GULLY SOCCER CLUB

ROUND 9
Friday, 18 April 8:30PM Frankston Pines V Whittlesea Zebras Monterey Res
Friday, 18 April 8:30PM Oakleigh Cannons V Melbourne Knights Jack Edwards Res
Saturday, 19 April 6:00PM Coburg United V Altona Magic Knights Stdm
Sunday, 20 April 3:00PM Heidelberg United V Richmond Olympic Park (Village)
Sunday, 20 April 3:00PM Preston Lions V Western Suburbs BT Connor Res
Sunday, 20 April 4:00PM South Melbourne V Fawkner Blues Bob Jane Stdm
Saturday, or Sunday, 20 April A.I.S. V Green Gully Cavaliers TBC *

HEIDELBERG UNITED WARRIORS

Preston Lions completely dominated last season, taking out the Minor Premiership after starting the campaign with a three point deduction. It then went on to defeat Whittlesea Zebras 3-1 in the Grand Final to capture its 4th VPL title.

ROUND 10
FRIDAY, 25 APRIL ANZAC DAY CELEBRATION MATCH TBC
Saturday, 26 April 3:00PM Fawkner Blues V Oakleigh Cannons C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 27 April 3:00PM Frankston Pines V Western Suburbs Monterey Res
Sunday, 27 April 3:00PM Melbourne Knights V A.I.S. Knights Stdm
Sunday, 27 April 5:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V Preston Lions Green Gully Res
Monday, 28 April 8:15PM Altona Magic V South Melbourne Paisley Park Res
Monday, 28 April 8:15PM Richmond V Coburg United Kevin Bartlett Res
Monday, 28 April 8:15PM Whittlesea Zebras V Heidelberg United Epping Stdm

ROUND 11
Friday, 2 May 8:30PM Oakleigh Cannons V Altona Magic Jack Edwards Res
Saturday, 3 May 4:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V Western Suburbs Green Gully Res
Saturday, 3 May 6:00PM Coburg United V Whittlesea Zebras Knights Stdm
Sunday, 4 May 3:00PM Preston Lions V Melbourne Knights BT Connor Res
Sunday, 4 May 4:00PM South Melbourne V Richmond Bob Jane Stdm
Sunday, 4 May 5:00PM Heidelberg United V Frankston Pines Olympic Park (Village)
Saturday, 3 or Sunday, 4 May A.I.S. V Fawkner Blues TBC *

ROUND 12
Friday, 9 May 8:15PM Richmond V Oakleigh Cannons Kevin Bartlett Res
Friday, 9 May 8:30PM Frankston Pines V Coburg United Monterey Res
Saturday, 10 May 6:30PM Altona Magic V A.I.S. Paisley Park Res
Sunday, 11 May 3:00PM Fawkner Blues V Preston Lions C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 11 May 3:00PM Melbourne Knights V Green Gully Cavaliers Knights Stdm
Sunday, 11 May 500PM Heidelberg United V Western Suburbs Olympic Park (Village)
Sunday, 11 May 500PM Whittlesea Zebras V South Melbourne Epping Stdm :

ROUND 13
Friday, 16 May 8:30PM Oakleigh Cannons V Whittlesea Zebras Jack Edwards Res
Saturday, 17 May 4:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V Fawkner Blues Green Gully Res
Saturday, 17 May 6:00PM Coburg United V Heidelberg United Knights Stdm
Sunday, 18 May 3:00PM Preston Lions V Altona Magic BT Connor Res
Sunday, 18 May 3:00PM Western Suburbs V Melbourne Knights Ralph Res
Sunday, 18 May 4:00PM South Melbourne V Frankston Pines Bob Jane Stdm
Saturday, 17 or Sunday, 18 May A.I.S. V Richmond TBC *

ROUND 14
Friday, 23 May 8:30PM Oakleigh Cannons V Frankston Pines Jack Edwards Res
Saturday, 24 May 4:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V Altona Magic Green Gully Res :
Sunday, 25 May 3:00PM Melbourne Knights V Fawkner Blues Knights Stdm
Sunday, 25 May 3:00PM Preston Lions V Richmond BT Connor Res
Sunday, 25 May 3:00PM Western Suburbs V Coburg United Ralph Res
Sunday, 25 May 4:00PM South Melbourne V Heidelberg United Bob Jane Stdm
Saturday, 24 or Sunday, 25 May A.I.S. V Whittlesea Zebras TBC *

ROUND 15
Saturday, 31 May 4:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V Richmond Green Gully Res
Saturday, 31 May 6:00PM Coburg United V South Melbourne Knights Stdm
Saturday, 31 May 6:30PM Altona Magic V Melbourne Knights Paisley Park Res
Sunday, 1 June 3:00PM Fawkner Blues V Western Suburbs C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 1 June 5:00PM Heidelberg United V Oakleigh Cannons Olympic Park (Village)
Sunday, 1 June 5:00PM Whittlesea Zebras V Preston Lions Epping Stdm
Saturday, 31 May or Sunday, 1 June Frankston Pines V A.I.S. Monterey Res

ROUND 16
Friday, 6 June 8:30PM Oakleigh Cannons V Coburg United Jack Edwards Res
Saturday, 7 June 4:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V Whittlesea Zebras Green Gully Res
Sunday, 8 June 3:00PM Fawkner Blues V Altona Magic C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 8 June 3:00PM Melbourne Knights V Richmond Knights Stdm
Sunday, 8 June 3:00PM Preston Lions V Frankston Pines BT Connor Res
Sunday, 8 June 3:00PM Western Suburbs V South Melbourne Ralph Res
Saturday, 7 or Sunday, 8 June A.I.S. V Heidelberg United TBC *

ROUND 17
Friday, 13 June 8:15PM Richmond V Fawkner Blues Kevin Bartlett Res
Friday, 13 June 8:30PM Frankston Pines V Green Gully Cavaliers Monterey Res
Saturday, 14 June 6:00PM Coburg United V A.I.S. Knights Stdm
Saturday, 14 June 6:30PM Altona Magic V Western Suburbs Paisley Park Res
Sunday, 15 June 4:00PM South Melbourne V Oakleigh Cannons Bob Jane Stdm
Sunday, 15 June 5:00PM Heidelberg United V Preston Lions Olympic Park (Village)
Sunday, 15 June 5:00PM Whittlesea Zebras V Melbourne Knights Epping Stdm

ROUND 18
Saturday, 21 June 4:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V Heidelberg United Green Gully Res
Saturday, 21 June 6:30PM Altona Magic V Richmond Paisley Park Res
Sunday, 22 June 3:00PM Fawkner Blues V Whittlesea Zebras C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 22 June 3:00PM Melbourne Knights V Frankston Pines Knights Stdm
Sunday, 22 June 3:00PM Preston Lions V Coburg United BT Connor Res
Sunday, 22 June 3:00PM Western Suburbs V Oakleigh Cannons Ralph Res
Saturday, 21 or Sunday, 22 June A.I.S. V South Melbourne TBC *

ROUND 19
Friday, 28 June 8:15PM Richmond V Western Suburbs Kevin Bartlett Res
Friday, 28 June 8:30PM Frankston Pines V Fawkner Blues Monterey Res
Sunday, 29 June 3:00PM Heidelberg United V Melbourne Knights Olympic Park (Village)
Sunday, 29 June 3:00PM South Melbourne V Preston Lions Bob Jane Stdm
Sunday, 29 June 5:00PM Oakleigh Cannons V A.I.S. Jack Edwards Res
Sunday, 29 June 5:00PM Whittlesea Zebras V Altona Magic Epping Stdm
Monday, 30 June 8:15PM Coburg United V Green Gully Cavaliers Knights Stdm

ROUND 20
Friday, 11 July 8:30PM Richmond V Whittlesea Zebras Kevin Bartlett Res
Saturday, 12 July 4:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V South Melbourne Green Gully Res
Saturday, 12 July 6:30PM Altona Magic V Frankston Pines Paisley Park Res
Sunday, 13 July 3:00PM Fawkner Blues V Heidelberg United C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 13 July 3:00PM Melbourne Knights V Coburg United Knights Stdm
Sunday, 13 July 3:00PM Preston Lions V Oakleigh Cannons BT Connor Res
Sunday, 13 July 3:00PM Western Suburbs V A.I.S. Ralph Res

ROUND 21
Friday, 18 July 8:30PM Frankston Pines V Richmond Monterey Res
Saturday, 19 July 6:00PM Coburg United V Fawkner Blues Knights Stdm
Sunday, 20 July 3:00PM Heidelberg United V Altona Magic Olympic Park (Village)
Sunday, 20 July 3:00PM South Melbourne V Melbourne Knights Bob Jane Stdm
Sunday, 20 July 5:00PM Oakleigh Cannons V Green Gully Cavaliers Jack Edwards Res
Sunday, 20 July 5:00PM Whittlesea Zebras V Western Suburbs Epping Stdm
Saturday, or Sunday 20 July A.I.S. V Preston Lions TBC *

ROUND 22
Friday, 25 July 8:15PM Richmond V Heidelberg United Kevin Bartlett Res
Saturday, 26 July 4:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V A.I.S. Green Gully Res
Saturday, 26 July 6:30PM Altona Magic V Coburg United Paisley Park Res
Sunday, 27 July 3:00PM Fawkner Blues V South Melbourne C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 27 July 3:00PM Melbourne Knights V Oakleigh Cannons Knights Stdm
Sunday, 27 July 3:00PM Western Suburbs V Preston Lions Ralph Res
Sunday, 27 July 5:00PM Whittlesea Zebras V Frankston Pines Epping Stdm

ROUND 23
Friday, 1 August 8:30PM Oakleigh Cannons V Fawkner Blues Jack Edwards Res
Saturday, 2 August 6:00PM Coburg United V Richmond Knights Stdm
Sunday, 3 August 3:00PM Preston Lions V Green Gully Cavaliers BT Connor Res
Sunday, 3 August 3:00PM Western Suburbs V Frankston Pines Ralph Res
Sunday, 3 August 3:00PM South Melbourne V Altona Magic Bob Jane Stdm
Sunday, 3 August 5:00PM Heidelberg United V Whittlesea Zebras Olympic Park (Village)
Saturday, 2 or Sunday, 3 August A.I.S. V Melbourne Knights TBC *

ROUND 24
Friday, 8 August 8:15PM Richmond V South Melbourne Kevin Bartlett Res
Friday, 8 August 8:30PM Frankston Pines V Heidelberg United Monterey Res
Saturday, 9 August 6:30PM Altona Magic V Oakleigh Cannons Paisley Park Res
Sunday, 10 August 3:00PM Fawkner Blues V A.I.S. C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 10 August 3:00PM Melbourne Knights V Preston Lions Knights Stdm
Sunday, 10 August 3:00PM Western Suburbs V Green Gully Cavaliers Ralph Res
Sunday, 10 August 5:00PM Whittlesea Zebras V Coburg United Epping Stdm

ROUND 25
Friday, 15 August 8:30PM Oakleigh Cannons V Richmond Jack Edwards Res
Saturday, 16 August 4:00PM Green Gully Cavaliers V Melbourne Knights Green Gully Res
Sunday, 17 August 3:00PM Preston Lions V Fawkner Blues BT Connor Res
Sunday, 17 August 3:00PM Western Suburbs V Heidelberg United Ralph Res
Sunday, 17 August 4:00PM South Melbourne V Whittlesea Zebras Bob Jane Stdm
Sunday, 17 August 6:00PM Coburg United V Frankston Pines Knights Stdm
Saturday, 16 or Sunday, 17 August A.I.S. V Altona Magic TBC *

ROUND 26
Sunday, 24 August 3:00PM Altona Magic V Preston Lions Paisley Park Res
Sunday, 24 August 3:00PM Fawkner Blues V Green Gully Cavaliers C.B Smith Res
Sunday, 24 August 3:00PM Frankston Pines V South Melbourne Monterey Res
Sunday, 24 August 3:00PM Heidelberg United V Coburg United Olympic Park (Village)
Sunday, 24 August 3:00PM Melbourne Knights V Western Suburbs Knights Stdm
Sunday, 24 August 3:00PM Richmond V A.I.S. Kevin Bartlett Res
Sunday, 24 August 3:00PM Whittlesea Zebras V Oakleigh Cannons Epping Stdm

FINALS SERIES
Friday, 29 & Sunday, 31 August **WEEK 1**
Saturday, 6 & Sunday, 7 August **WEEK 2**
Saturday, 13 & Sunday, 14 August **WEEK 3**
Sunday, 21 September **GRAND FINAL**

The Knights are holding high expectations this year.

* ALL night fixtures are subject to change pending the floodlighting meeting FFV approval
** FFV is assessing the feasibility of hosting AIS home games in Regional Victoria and/or Canberra
***When AIS is playing in regional Victoria VIS will play at DISC, time and dates TBC
**** Fixtures subject to change depending on Melbourne Victory fixtures for the AFC Champions League
*****Under 21 game to precede main fixture as a curtain raiser. KO times to commence 2 hours before senior game.

Victorian Men's International Tour Thursday 3 July - Sunday 6 July

THE GROUNDS
Altona Magic: Paisley Park Reserve MEL: 55-C5
Fawkner Blues: CB Smith Reserve MEL: 17-J2
99-K8 **Green Gully:** Green Gully Reserve MEL: 14-E8
Melb Knights: Knights Stadium MEL: 27-A6
Preston Lions: BT Connor Res MEL: 18-B2
South Melbourne: Bob Jane Stadium MEL: 2K F6
Whittlesea Stallions: Epping Stadium MEL: 182-B4
Coburg Utd: Knights Stadium MEL: 27-A6
Frankston Pines: Monterey Reserve MEL:
Heidelberg United: Olympic Village MEL: 19-D11
Oakleigh Cannons: Jack Edwards Res MEL: 69-H9
Richmond Eagles: Kevin Bartlett Res MEL: 59-A1
Western Suburbs: Ralph Reserve 40-A2

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RICHMOND 509 Bridge Road 9429 7717
ESSENDON Homemaker Hub DFO 9351 0669
NUNAWADING 343 Whitehorse Road 9878 8555
EPPING 3/560 High Street 9408 4911
FOUNTAIN GATE Fountain Gate Super Centre 8786 5770
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Fawkner Blues

OLD HAND VANIS LEADS THE BLUES

Fawkner to avoid repeat of '07

For the Fawkner Blues, the upcoming season looms as arguably the most crucial in the club's long history after the side narrowly managed to avoid what would have been the Blues' first-ever relegation from the top flight, in 2007.

Hopes, not to be confused with expectations, are high as always heading into their round one clash with the Knights, after a preseason of transfer activity. However, new coach Vlado Vlanis is in his first season at the helm and will undoubtedly know he will need to keep the Blues away from the bottom end of the table if he is to make his tenure a lengthy one.

The collective losses of last season's top-scorer Mark Tsiorlas, along with best-and-fairest and goalkeeper Steven Tilovski, former Melbourne Victory player Carl Recchia, and also Daniel Rocco and Mark Vazzochi will have certainly been the cause of a few headaches for the coaching staff though.

Vlanis has brought in ex-Essendon striker Joseph Youseff to fill the void created by the departure of Tsiorlas while the number one jersey vacated by Tilovski will be worn by the 2005 championship-winning keeper, Pasi Schwalger, after a disappointing stint at Heidelberg.

In addition to this, the arrival of exciting young midfielder Yannis Galanos is a genuine cause for optimism at CB Smith Reserve, while Ralph Napoli has signed from the Sunshine Georgies to bolster the defence.

The majority of the members who helped to form the equal fifth best defence in the league last season have also stayed on and, their form permitting, coupled with a successful striking partnership between Ricky Chilico and Youseff, could see the Blues at best finishing just outside of the top four. Throw in a number of young faces signed from Division One and Two clubs and Vlanis is obviously going for a more youthful team which has the potential to develop into a feared outfit with time.

However at worst, and probably more realistically, Fawkner may well be facing relegation, a situation most likely to occur if the Blues cannot find a means of replacing the valuable goals which Tsiorlas provided last season.

While all of the new players are quality signings, whether Youseff and Schwalger are up to the task of stepping into the admittedly large shoes of the proven match winner Tsiorlas and the established match-saver Tilovski, will without doubt determine if the Blues can remain in the Foxtel Cup beyond this season.

In all likelihoods though, Blues fans should probably brace themselves for another relegation dogfight, which may see Vlanis under pressure in the latter half of the season if he can't achieve satisfactory results. In addition to this, the Blues' faithful can forget their dream of seeing their side winning the Foxtel Cup for the first time – for this season, at least.

Given time, and if the core of this group can remain together, there is definitely the recipe for success down the track. It all hinges on the ability of the side to hang in there in the top flight, and prevent relegation, a feat also never experienced at CB Smith Reserve. Yet.

By Jeremy O'Neil

Photos by John Punshon

Josef Youssef, seen here in action for Essendon Royals against Robert Bresciano of Fawkner early last season, has been recruited to spearhead the Blues attack for the new campaign.

Fawkner coach Vlado Vanis & last season's top scorer Mark Tsiorlas. Mark has since left for Heidelberg and leaves some big shoes to fill at CB Smith Reserve.

FAWKNER BLUES FAST FACTS

Formed: 1965

President: Santo Rizzo

Captain: TBC

Coach: Vlado Vanis

Ground address:
CB Smith Reserve, Fawkner
Mel: 17-J2

VPL championships: None

Final position in 2007: 10th

Top Scorer in 2007:
Mark Tsiorlas, 9 goals

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007:
Carl Rechia, 17 votes

Squad 2008
Raffaele Napoli (from Sunshine Georgies)
Boris Masic (from Bentleigh Greens)
Goran Petrovic (from Croatia)
Wes Coles
Jason Principato
Michael Packovski
Metin Alibeyi
Vlado Juric (from Melb Knight)
Yanni Galanos (from Richmond)
Adam Zilic (from Melb Knights)
Clifford Tuck (from Bentleigh Greens)
Rasario Mancuso
Joey Youssef (from Essendon Royals)
Fikret Husanovic (from Bentleigh Greens)
Zia Younan (from Preston Lions)
Leigh Squillacioti
Mitch Bosevski
Nazir (from Thomastown)
Ben Cogger (from Bentleigh Greens)
Dejan
Pasi Schwazger (from Heidelberg)
Boris Radman (from Western Suburbs)

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Coburg United

NEW BOYS HOLD NO FEARS

Coburg set to hit dizzy heights

Twenty-seven years ago, a little known team called Holland Park clinched the 1981 Victorian Central Amateur League Division Two Title.

Last year the current named Coburg United celebrated reaching the heights of Victorian football, as they finished second in State League One. A great tale about a club which has risen through the ranks, and now is about to embark on their greatest achievement in their history.

Many people may be surprised to see Coburg in the top flight, however just ask anyone involved in the club, and they will assure you that this success isn't a one off, but due to all the hard work on and off the pitch to awake this sleeping giant.

One of these people is their very proud coach Joe Montemurro, who believes his side has what it takes to give the league a shake up. "Survival has not been mentioned at all, I'll be looking for our players to gel well together and get some results", "Our team is ambitious", said Joe.

Montemurro credited last season's success to the dedication of his backroom staff, as well as the support of a great committee. The excitement of a new ground being currently built will also help stabilize the club.

Coburg has bolstered their squad with some impressive and top profile players. In come Anthony Magnacca, Andy Vlahos, Serder Pir, Tansel Basar, Fidell Richards & Tomas Kovar. Mix that with current players such as, Adam Hrehoreisn, Sime Kovacevic, Daniel Rocco, Mustafa Mustafa, Alex Josifovski, Ross Thompson & Serkan Oksuz - all with experience playing in the Victorian Premier League, former National Soccer League, A-League & abroad respectively, you have a team that can strike fear into any opposition.

Montemurro will be looking towards captain Mustafa Mustafa to lead his charges again this season. Coburg have already impressed well with their friendly games recently, defeating Oakleigh Cannons (2-1) & Green Gully (1-0) as well as holding 2007 Champions Preston Lions to a 0-0 draw.

When asked about his choice for the 2008 Champion, Montemurro cheekily replied 'Coburg!'(tongue in cheek), but also admitted the usual suspect will be up there with the Knights looking strong. He hopes that Season 2008 brings out some

By Andrew Fisher

Photos by Daniel Flis

Leading Coburg United this season with the captain's armbandwill be Mustafa Mustafa.

Coburg's top scorer from last season, Serkan Oksuz, makes a return to the VPL after helping his club gain promotion from the First Division.

COBURG UNITED FAST FACTS

Formed: 1979

President: Sam Isik

Captain: Mustafa Mustafa

Coach: Joe Montemurro

Ground address:
Knights stadium, Sunshine
Mel: 27-A6

VPL championships: None

Final position in 2007:
Division One Runners-Up

Top scorer in 2007:
Serkan Oksuz

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007: N/A

Squad 2008
Adam Hreheoresn
Thomas Kovar (from Gully)
Sedar Pir (from Preston)
Sime Kovacevic (from Wellington Phoenix)
Ahmet Gurpinar
Peter Tichy
John Petridis
George Tiolous
Ross Thompson
Brett Gilmour (from Georgies)
Mustafa Mustafa
Fidell Richards (from Magic)
Anthony Magnacca (from Georgies)
Tansel Baser from (South Melb)
Alex Josifovski
Nick Harrhy
Serkan Oksuz
Andy Vlahos (from Heidelberg Utd)
Edemar Garcia (from Brunswick City)
Ahmet Ikiz

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Australian Institute of Sport

AIS YOUNG GUNS KEEN TO IMPRESS

New crop of Canberra whizz kids

The Australian Institute of Sport finished twelfth in the 2007 Foxtel Cup, their first season playing for points in Victoria's premier football competition.

Their form fluctuated during the season and their placing was one spot above the relegation places, but with a charter of developing players the season would have to be viewed as a success. Most notable were the exploits of James Holland. Holland took out the Foxtel Cup's Under 21 Player of the Season Award before joining Newcastle Jets in the A-League and having an immediate impact, soon earning a call-up to the senior national team training squad.

He was not alone in capturing the eye of A-League coaches, with Tahj Minniecon picked up by the Queensland Roar, Mathew Mullen was signed by Adelaide United and local side Melbourne Victory recruited defender Sebastian Ryall. Goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne recovered from a terrible start to after departing Kevin Bartlett Reserve in an ambulance when landing heavily claiming a cross on the opening night to regularly perform well and then be signed by the Central Coast Mariners. Top goalscorer Milos Lujic, who notched up six goals, has moved on to Oakleigh Cannons.

Notable scalps for the team last season included defeating Grand Finalists Whittlesea Zebras 2-0 in March, Oakleigh Cannons by the same scoreline in May, eventual champions Preston Lions 4-3 in July and Heidelberg United 4-0 in August.

James Holland takes out the Under 21 Player of the Year Award last year.

The team is sure to benefit from the experience of the 2007 campaign. Whether the new crop of scholarship holders are of the same quality as their predecessors is something that will only be exposed over the course of the season. There can be no doubt that the side will be quick and fit, and anyone taking them lightly could learn a harsh lesson.

Founded in 1981, last season was the programme's first foray into senior competitive football after previously competing in the NSL Youth leagues and two years of playing friendlies against NSW and VPL clubs. Their campaign in 2008 could face interruptions with some players likely to be involved in the AFC Under 17's Championship in Uzbekistan in September, with the top four nations progressing to the 2009 FIFA Under 17 World Cup in Nigeria. The AFC Youth Championships do not commence until November in Saudi Arabia, which should have less of an impact on the squad.

The long line of Australian internationals to come through the AIS ranks, highlighted again last week against Qatar when former pupils Josh Kennedy and Marco Besciano were on the scoresheet, means it is likely that some of the boys who take the park for them in 2008 will go onto bigger and better things. It is unlikely they will be consistent enought to push for a finals berth, but if they could uncover the next Mark Viduka, Lucas Neill or Brett Emerton anything could be possible.

By Mark Boric

Photos by John Punshon

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT

AIS Fast Facts

Formed: 1981

President: N/A

Captain: TBC

Coach: Steve O'Connor

Ground address:
Plays all matches away

VPL championships: None

Final position in 2007: 11th

Top scorer in 2007:
Milos Lujic, 6 goals

Most Gold Medal votes in 2007:
James Holland, 24 votes

goal! Weekly

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TSIGAN'S TSIGAR With Mike Lilikakis

RIPPED.
Or at least ripped off.

2008
Here we are again.
As the old adage thus sayeth, "Another season, another larf."
How can we expect any thrills, spills, chills unless our players are on some pills?
When was the last time anyone dope-tested out players?
Blame the FFV.
For everything.
Unless they want to stop just yakkin' on the phone to phoney baloney prospective clients, or check and do emails to anyone of consequence….don't expect a straight answer. Unless you're www.bigmalakies.com.

More on that next week.

I haven't heard any KAZAA, or WOOHOO this summer about anything KAZOO or WAHAA pertaining football in this said VPL.
Fancy a VPL being VPL when the only teams in the League are MPL. (M for Melbourne you git) Fancy the coverage being thrust amongst our 4 million odd culturally diverse throng, and shown up to be what it is. Big Malakies.

Muahahahahaha after a joke about a priest, a rabbi, and a small dog.
I don't like ROFL.
He's gay.

VPL and FFV are about as gay as a fart after a lamington.
There's no animosity between clubs anymore.
There's no cheap LPG anymore.
There's no heritage anymore.

ALLEGRO MODERATO
"The great masses of the people will more easily fall for a BIG lie, than a small one."
Great quote from a bloke who had a cricket strip for a moustache.
How can we be serious unless we twirl the mo?

For shame.
I've already witnessed the lengths a team will go to achieve some form of mediocratic infamy.

Och Aye Laddie!

Fancy an U13's team calling up 6 Vic Reps whom aren't affiliated with said team, to play in a Final of a Wog (pre-season) Cup, just to add a phony baloney trophy.
This is politics?
This is democracy?
This is Bollocks!

Mediocrity hasn't changed.
I experienced much of the same with the argle bargle foo ferra of parental, and club pettiness way back in my day.

A Fed-Inkum Tru-Blu Dink- Di would surmise and belch out, "Once a wanker, always a wanker!"
Maybe a little, "Chewy in yer boot!"
Perhaps even a,"Havagoyamug!!!"
That's what lacks in Wogball.
A full on Ozzie Spirit.

To wantingly and desperately chase a piece of plastic called a "trophy", and yet be undermanned at a VPL Final leaves a lot to be desired.
4 Barstaff for 5 thousand paying spectators.
I'd love to meet the brains trust of that venture.

QUO VADIS?
Yeah I suppose you could declare, "Who cares, man?"
Well pthhhhhh to that crapola Freund!
A team could BUY itself 40 trophies, have them engraved to their liking, and put them on display so philanthropic engineers can have a gander whilst getting pissed, talking and comparing the 'good ol' days'.
This year…
Let's just say, I'm, going to name names.
I'm going to point fingers.
I'm going to poke, stick and jab.

Catches win matches.
That's a fact.

Lawyers are going to have a field day with me.
I'll bring lunch.
Well dang, I CAN COOK!!!
I'm a wog.
Gee I wish wogs played cricket.
Kasprowicz is a wog.
That's a cool name.
Australia has as much chance of winning the FIFI, I mean….hahahahaha!.FIFA World Cup, as I have of being Rudolph Nurayev.
Pirhoettes? Save that for the fairies.
I'm much more impartial towards a good souplex, or bodyslam.
If I was a WWF, yes WWF wrestler, I'd call myself The Mon Star.
French, just to piss off the Yanks, and a Champs de Elysses Mon Blanc Ces C'asses.

And all that Jazz.

QUOL e FIE
So I scammed a ticket to get into the Telstra Dome, yea sneaky sneaky, and spotted

the uber striker maestro, Count Krncevic glockenshpieling mit ex- Socceroos, and yanked him away for a diatribe.
I can't disclose the information, however I will say I've never laughed so hard after a couple of drinky-drinky's.

It was the bestest 30minutes of football EVER!
3 goals of high caliber, and 60 minutes of why are we playing tonight?
Pimm's is a great gin, but he's not Pommie, he's Dutch.

Yes, the Dutch.

Where there are more holes than Dykes, and orange is a color more Valencio, than backyard Wogtree citrus.
You've got to hand it to the Dutch, they were here before the Poms, they would'nt have said "Sorry", because we would've have apartheid…no wait that's Afrikaans.
Woops I did it again. But Van Diemens Land sounds better than Tasmania, which should secede and declare themselves a country anyway.

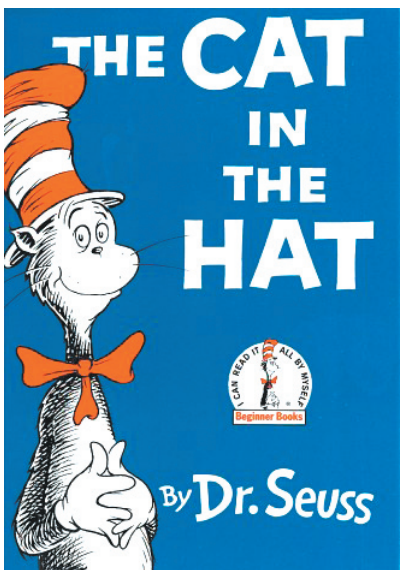
Muchly obliged to Ms. N Hayle for information pertaining Tassie.

If I hear "Well it's a grand ol' team to play for…" one more time after a wog derby, I'll shat a brack. If I was Kiwi I'd shut a bruck.
Wog Teams MUST bring back the Wog songs to accommodate the Wogs who make the clubs what they are. Wog teams. Wog money. Wog Wog.
If oi was Oirish, I'd sing an Oirish dittie.
If I was a Pom, I'd sing abovementioned song.
If I was Greek, I'd sing,
"Da da didla da da
Ena pousti sto saloni,
Da da didla da da
Me to boutso tou maloni…"

After every victory…
In the clubrooms...
With all the old dudes.

Spondoolie speaks more to a young mind these days, more than ever before. Shame on the Playstation Generation for holding their parents to ransom over schedules, fixtures, sessions and BMW's, just to act as if they are superstars.
Hell, let's breed and hammer our kids with success in sport for financial gain, so we can retire at 45, and buy 3 more houses.

Exploitation and milking are not dirty words.



Blood, sweat and tears are though.

The Branderies are in snooze mode.
There's more action in Wandle Bank.

It's time to take a stand.
Take the Cat by the Hat, and snap him flat.
Yeah Baby.
Put him down.
Take the Hat.
Give it to the Emperor.
Be indoctrinated into the Dark Side.
Watch the Emperor sing and dance with the Hat on.

Go Sith.

Gudenacht.

With love;
The Tsigan

CENTURY 21 CUP KICKS OFF IN GEELONG

The Century 21 Cup for 2008 kicked off at Bell Park Sports Club in Geelong on Friday night with a one-nil victory to favourite North Geelong over Breakwater Eagles representing the Geelong Regional Football Association. The Cup is the successor to the long running and highly successful Geelong Advertiser Cup and involves all the local teams and Hoppers Crossing from Werribee. This year it is played in two groups of four teams and in the second match on Friday Corio beat newcomer Surfcoast by three goals to nil.

North's only goal was scored by former NSL player Grgo Saric and came courtesy of deflection off the keeper, while veterans Dragi Sobevski and Stanko Leban gave Corio a two-nil half-time lead and Enes Eren added the third late on. On Sunday night it is the turn of Geelong Rangers to take on host club Bell Park at 6 pm, followed by Hoppers Crossing against Geelong.

- By Roy Hay

BOO'S WORLD

With Mark Boric

Welcome back to another season of the longest running weekly column about local football in Goal! Weekly. Take that Katsa and Tsigan, you Johnnie (in Katsa's case, Walker) Come Latelys.

Australia's World Cup qualification campaign began last Wednesday with a 3-0 defeat of Qatar. Now we are in Asia we get a proper home and away group qualification path. It's so much like a coming of age, we should have a 21st Birthday-style party to mark the occasion. Get Corey Delaney to organise it, guaranteed coverage on A Current Affair and Today Tonight would be assured.

Advice to Pim Verbeek: If you are going to try and talk Mark Viduka into being available for World Cup qualifying games later in the campaign, don't mention anything about the revolutionary new skin-tight kit. I'm also suprised Craig Moore retired from international football after the Qatar game, I would have thought he could have played on as his body should be well preserved in alcohol.

I've made a few amendments in the script of my Australian football hooligan movie. It will now be called Wurundjeri Way Elite. In addition to the firm it focuses on being named after the street that runs alongside Telstra Dome, actors Ernie Dingo and David Gulpilil will also join the cast as I've been advised it will be easier to secure Government funding with an Aboriginal theme. The catchphrase "jog on, my son!" will be replaced with "walkabout on, my son!"

The VPL season is upon us once again, and for some it will be a long one. From what I've heard, the Fawkner lads will have terrible memories if they hear the "down, down, down, down, da down, down, down" part of The Stone Roses' Fool's Gold in years to come. "Gold road's sure a long road, winds on through the hills for fifteen days" will remind plenty of players about pre-season training. "I'm no clown, I won't back down, I don't need you to tell me what's goin' down" could well be what a belligerent referee says when confronted by an argumentative player. Music reference quota met, it's time to turn on the FFV.

The FFV Foxtel Cup website went into meltdown after their January 3rd piece called "Excitement builds as Foxtel Cup fixtures released". The excitement must have been too much, there has not been another update since. All that anticipation over a fixture containing more To Be Confirmed's than a Catholic Primary School.

Some of the Socceroo supporters who made it over to Corey's house party.

Heads have rolled after Melbourne Victory's disappointing A League Championship defence. Media Manager Tony Ising was given the chop, possibly to send a warning shot to the coaching staff. Ljubo Milcevic remains on the payroll, they will probably hope to get rid of him during Council Hard Waste Collection season. Though at the end of it they may still be stuck with him sitting on the nature strip.

The EPL is looking at scheduling an extra round, with games to be played overseas. I expect a media report of Melissa Fischer-Massa talking of bidding to get one of these games played at Altona's Paisley Park any day now.

Maybe the refresh button on my browser isn't working, I've just tried it on the Foxtel Cup website to check the updates with the season set to kick off but have come up with nothing.

See you at Kevin Bartlett Reserve on Friday night. I'll be the bloke looking at the construction barriers on the Monash Freeway roadworks wondering how the hell am I meant to get over them to find the match ball on the other side.

Until next week...

KATSA'S KORNER

With George Katsamboukas

Welcome to Season 2008, and what a BIG year it promises to be!

Summer was not very kind to Katsa, with an interstate holiday cut short due to poor weather, the highlight of this trip was watching a group of punters over from England drinking a bevvy or 10 at a Surfers Paradise watering hole, and taking the absolute Mickey out of passers by who tried to pick up a $5 note from the foot path.

Problem for these passer bys was that the lads from England had super glued the $5 note on to the Foot Path.

Everyone has been complaining of Interest Rates rises, Katsa's key economic indicator is the number of times the price of J Walker and W N Filedd have increased. Thankfully they haven't.

FOXTEL CUP

Over to the Foxtel Cup we go.
This week, the Foxtel Cup matches commence.

Great news for Melbourne's various Night Clubs. Car dealerships, café's and G-Star Raw Outlets as the Foxtel Cup Player's disposable income will increase over the coming weeks.

And in under 2 months, their State League Counterparts will also be hearing the Caching sound as they will commence their Season and along with it, their $$ will start coming in.

Bad news though for the various club's El Supremos, who will have to go out and find the $$$$ to pay these Players.

The Tradition will continue this year, I will continue to provide a weekly Scoreboard of Foxtel Cup Coaching Casualties, and the Scorer has agreed to terms again this year and will ably assist.

Wickets will fall early, as the pitch for 2008 has been described as one suiting the various Club Administrators Bowlers.

Last year saw a significant restructure to the various Leagues, with the reduction of the Foxtel Cup competition from 16 teams down to 14, this then had a flow on effect through the lower leagues, with more teams being relegated, than in previous years.

Vic Roads were forced to open up more lanes on the Westgate to cater for more "Customers" using the Bridge at 5pm on the last round of the season, these "Customers" were far from satisfied with their team's performance, and struggled to cope with the fact that their team was being relegated.

Just when Vic Roads thought it was safe to close down these additional lanes for Season 2008, thinking that each league would revert back to the traditional 2 up, 2 down system, a little birdie whispered in their ear, that more changes to the leagues could possibly take effect in 2009, and that there would be 4 Teams being relegated to reduce the number of teams to 12 in Season 2009.

Do I also dare to mention the word "V League"?
Hopefully all will be revealed over the next month or so!

RAMIN' IT HOME

Over to Derby we go, home of the Rams.

To quote a NSW race caller, they are sitting "Stone Motherless Last" and have about as much chance of avoiding the drop, as I have of swapping J Walker for water as my preferred drink.

Their new gaffer Paul Jewell put out the quote of the century - "I have more points on my drivers licence than Derby has in the Premiership ladder"
Great call!

The chips were down for Victory this season, but Ernie still has a "get out of jail free card" and can have another roll of the dice at the Asian Champions League.

VICTORY TO DEAL ACES

The Melbourne Victory would surely want to forget the season that just went past in a hurry.

Even the Derby County FC website is aware of their team's woes.
Clicking from screen to screen a black page appears on the screen for over 5 seconds.
Surely they could not be in mourning already?

Having won the A-League title last Season, Ernie's lads not only failed to make this season's finals, but they at one stage looked destined to win the dreaded wooden spoon.

Many blamed the absence of Fred as being a big factor. Fred or no Fred, they were simply not good enough, their upcoming Asian Cup campaign will provide them with a chance to turn their last poor season around.

Speaking of Ernie, seems that the cameras took a liking to him this season, as they zoomed in on him during the Victory live broadcasts at least once every 3 minutes.

Ernie never showed any emotion be it happy or unhappy as the matches unfolded, perhaps if the Victory gig turns a touch sour on him, he may consider entering the World Poker Tournament stage, his lack of facial expression would have his opponents guessing.

Wishing everyone a great Season 2008, and remember, to the winners the 3 points, to the losers there's always J Walker!

Until next week,

This is Katsa – Just as you've known him!

GOAL! WEEKLY NOW AVAILABLE AT THE FOLLOWING GOOD NEWSAGENTS EVERY MONDAY

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AIRPORT WEST NEXTRA, SHOP 73/74 WESTFIELD SHOP/CENTRE AIRPORT WEST VIC 3042	(03) 9330-4207
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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE 2008 – A PREVIEW

North of the border cousins prepare to kick-off the year

The 2008 NSW Premier League kicks off on Friday February 22, with competition newcomers the West Sydney Berries taking on Sydney Olympic at the Homebush Athletic Centre.

Once again, there has been plenty of transfer activity in the off-season, with the one-year contract continuing to play havoc with team stability in NSW's premier competition.

The champions, Blacktown City Demons, have had the guts ripped out of their 2007 side. Insiders have suggested that loyalty to the previous coach, Aytek Genc, was not extended to new coach Ken Schembri when Genc accepted an assistant's position at Sydney FC (from which he has since been removed).

As a result, there are few recognizable faces in the current Blacktown team, although Leo Carle and Jordan Simpson have been plucked from the A-League to lend their quality and experience. Pre-season results have been mediocre, and Blacktown could be in for an unusually difficult season.

Last season's beaten finalists, Bankstown Lions, look in far better shape. Player-coach Peter Tsekenis is still there to lend his robust methods in defence, while the Macedonian-backed club has also held on to prized possessions such as midfielder George Nohra, wing-backs Shane Webb and Steve Liavas, and promising striker Robbie Mileski.

Recently, they have also obtained the services of classy midfielder Tayfun Devrimol and ex-Manly striker James Monie, who had a spell in the A-League with Newcastle in 2005/06. On the minus side, they have lost their quick striker, Tallan Martin, to Marconi.

The two other "finalists" from last season will be very competitive once more. Marconi have recruited well, snatching the prolific Tolgay Ozbey from Blacktown, the speedy Tallan Martin from Bankstown, and the clever midfielder (and NSL veteran) Nahuel Arrarte from Sydney Olympic. In one of the most eagerly-anticipated pre-season tussles, Marconi overcame Bankstown in the first round of the Johnny Warren Cup.

Blacktown City Demons clinched the NSW title in 2007 after beating Bankstown Lions in a gripping Grand Final. The Demons won that day 3-1 and hope to repeat the dose under new coach Ken Schembri.

Unfortunately for the Italian-backed club, they have lost the two major stars of their outstanding Under 20 side from last year; striker Nathan Elasi has moved across the Murray, while promising midfielder Tayfun Burukkopru has joined Penrith-Nepean United.

Manly United, who came within a whisker of spoiling Blacktown's party in last year's preliminary final, have looked impressive in the pre-season; the 2007 Gold Medal winner Robbie Cattanach is still there, and fellow strikers Dusan Mihajlovic and Craig Midgley have been amongst the goals in the Johnny Warren Cup as well.

Of the others, the Sutherland Sharks could prove an interesting outsider; there are few stars in the side, but striker Brad Boardman has been in superb form during the Johnny Warren Cup, and Pedje Bojic, back home after a spell with Northampton Town in England, has looked an excellent acquisition.

Sydney Olympic, APIA Leichhardt and Wollongong FC all possess individual players of high quality, but will probably not have the depth to challenge for top honours this year. Sydney United may pose more of a threat, with Luka Glavas back from his unhappy spell in the A-League and other key players like Joe Vrkic and Petar Markovic still in the fold. Penrith-Nepean United finished bottom last year, and could cause the odd upset this time, but should not trouble the top sides unduly.

The competition has been expanded to 12 teams this season, and the two newcomers (included, for political reasons, instead of the Winter Super League's strongest side, the Bonnyrigg White Eagles) are the West Sydney Berries (formerly Canterbury-Marrickville) and the Macarthur Rams. Neither looks likely to do much damage in the Premier League.

All set for some fine football and enjoyable drama over the next few months!

FOOTBALL NSW

By Mike Salter in Sydney

Photos by Carlos Furtado

TASSIE GETS THE SHOW ON THE ROAD!

First round of Steve Hudson Cup commences

The Tasmanian soccer season commenced this weekend with the first round of matches on Sunday in the Steve Hudson Cup, a pre-season competition played in Launceston, Tasmania's second largest city, located in the north of the State.

The southern Tasmanian Summer Cup series commences next Friday evening, while the North-West Coast Summer Cup starts on Tuesday, 19 February.

Two southern Premier League outfits, South Hobart and Metro-Claremont, will participate in the Steve Hudson Cup as well as in their own southern Summer Cup series, which will put a strain on Metro's player resources.

Metro have a new coach in Ahmed Abdaltam, but the only new player they have signed is goalkeeper Michael McKenna from Taroona. McKenna has a wrist injury and may not play in the tournament.

Metro are unlikely to reach the Steve Hudson Cup final, a feat which they achieved last season. Abdaltam, a former professional player in Greece and Egypt, will have to rely on many youngsters this season.

South Hobart, on the other hand, have a wealth of talent from which to choose and, with new coach Ken Morton in charge, they look the early season favourites for the league title, as well as for every other trophy on offer.

Morton, who coached in the old NSL and also in Vietnam and Malaysia, has just completed a three-year stint in Ethiopia. In pre-season friendlies, South have beaten Hobart Olympic 4-1 and New Town Eagles 7-0.

South Hobart's new coach, Ken Morton.

South Hobart, who finished second in the Premier League last year, a point behind champions Tilford Zebras, have been strengthened with the signing of Glenorchy Knights players Jonathon Ladic, Matthew Brown and Shay Hickey.

Billy Gasparinatos has rejoined South after a season with Taroona, while Somerset's Ricky Eaves is also considering playing for South after being accepted into the Tasmania Police Academy at Rokeby.

Tony Ortuso, a police officer, has resumed training for South, who have also acquired Sahm Taheri, an accomplished goalscorer from Hobart Olympic.

The bad news for South is that defender Nathan Robinson, also a police officer, will miss the season after damaging knee ligaments in the win over Eagles in the recent friendly. Robinson coached South to a league title in 2002 before moving to University as player-coach in 2005, after which he returned to South.

The northern sides contesting the Steve Hudson Cup are Northern Rangers, Prospect Knights and Launceston United, while Ulverstone, from the North-West Coast, are also participating.

Tasmanian Summer Cup holders and League Champions, Tilford Zebras.

The big absentees are Launceston City, who are celebrating their 50th anniversary this year and have decided not to compete as they will be conducting their own mini-tournament shortly as part of their anniversary celebrations.

The southern Summer Cup will comprise two groups playing in a round-robin series, with the winners of each group meeting in the final on Easter Monday.

The groups are: Group A: University, Metro-Claremont, Taroona, South Hobart and Hobart Olympic; Group B: Tilford Zebras, New Town Eagles, Glenorchy Knights, Kingborough Lions United and Clarence United.

Zebras are the holders of the trophy as well as the southern Premier League champions, but they will be hard-pressed to retain the pre-season trophy as they are in the tougher of the two groups and will do well to finish top.

FOOTBALL FEDERATION TASMANIA

By Walter Pless

Photos by Walter Pless

NIGHT SERIES STARTS IN WA

Perth SC to defend McInerney Ford Cup

The McInerney Ford Night Series starts on Friday the 15th of December, with 12 teams battling it out for the first prize of the WA football calendar.

The pre-season Series was launched at Perth Soccer Club this week, and having been training since early December, the players are raring to go.

The teams will divide into two groups of six for a round robin stage, with the top two in each group going on to the semifinals. In Group I will be Armadale, Cockburn City, Floreat Athena, Fremantle Spirit, Sorrento and Premier League newcomers Mandurah City.

In Group II, defending champions Perth will take on ECU Joondalup, Inglewood United, Stirling Lions, Swan IC and the Western Knights.

Perth captain Rob Puca said all the players were looking forward to getting on the pitch after a big pre-season. "The Night Series gives you a fantastic chance to be adventurous, try a few things and play some really attractive football," he said.

"The round robin format allows you to make a few mistakes, take a few chances and entertain the crowds. It'd be great to see a big crowd for the kick-off on Friday night - and it'd be even better to win the Series again!"

Friday night's match-ups see Stirling play ECU Joondalup at 6.30pm, followed by Perth and the Western Knights at 8.30pm. Gates at the Perth Soccer Club open at 5.30pm.

It will all culminate in the Final, to be held at the Litis Stadium on March 29. The McInerney Ford Night Series then gives way to the Football West State League - a feast of football in the coming months for fans and players alike!

Western Australian captains line up for the McInerney Ford Night Series which starts this Friday.

WA MAKES A GRAND STAND!

Football West has welcomed the announcement of a brand new major stadium, to be constructed at Kitchener Park.

CEO Garry Chandler said that the proposed stadium's ability to be swung into a rectangular pitch area was a massive boon for football, enabling Western Australia to potentially host major international and domestic matches in a purpose-built arena.

"A stadium such as this will become a state-of-the-art landmark for Perth, as well as providing football with a home for our biggest matches."

"If Australia is to host major international tournaments such as the Asian Cup, or even the World Cup, stadia like this are needed to bring the world game's international stars to the people of Perth."

Mr Chandler also expressed his hope that the Government would soon be able to implement the remaining findings of the Major Stadia Task Force, and commit funding to upgrade Member's Equity Stadium as an important rectangular venue.

He also urged authorities not to forget the needs of facilities for amateur and junior football, as well as other sports.

"Football is now the fastest growing sport in Australia, from the backyard to the playground, from the under-12s to the A-League," he said.

"With over $1 billion being committed to a new showpiece stadium, we must not forget where our sports stars are discovered, trained and developed – the grounds and pitches of amateur clubs and reserves all over the State."

BIRTH OF THE STATE LEAGUE

Victorian football embarks on a new era

In the first of a new Goal! Weekly series, Roy Hay takes us back in time to reminisce about some of the golden days of Australian football. With 2008 being the 50th Anniversary of the Victorian State League, what better era for BFTP to makes it debut than that historic season way back in 1958.

1958 was the first year of the State League in Victoria, started by the Victorian Amateur Soccer Football Association (VASFA) to provide an elite competition for the leading clubs.

It was instituted in part to head off a threatened breakaway by the top clubs in the state who were dissatisfied with the distribution of revenue from the main fixtures each weekend which were played at Olympic Park.

Nick Van Egmond of Hakoah picks the ball out of the air watched by his captain McIntosh in the game against JUST on 5th April 1958. This game was in the first round of the new State League. Photo: Sam Gold, *Soccer News*.

In New South Wales the breakaway Soccer Federation had already completed its first year, laying down a challenge to the established soccer authorities which was to lead eventually to the formation of the Australian Soccer Federation.

In Victoria, Juventus reached the end of a series of six championships in seven years since 1952. Wilhelmina who ran them close in 1958 was to gain the first of its titles in 1959.

Ringwood was Wilhelmina's new home under its charismatic leader John van Hoboken, who was to have a major influence on the game in the next generation. Wilhelmina beat Juventus three–nil in the final of the Dockerty Cup and Hakoah won the Armstrong Cup which was the Reserves competition.

The post-war migration from Europe which was to transform the face of Australia was at its height and 9 of the 12 clubs in the State League represented immigrant communities. Indeed all twelve did, for the Scots were influential at Moreland and the English at Box Hill and Brighton. You might ask what about Geelong? In 1954–5 it renamed itself IAMA, the Italian-Australian Migrants Association and the team had a nucleus of former Juventus players and was sponsored by Nino Borsari, the famous Olympic cyclist, whose sports store was in Lygon Street, in Carlton.

W (?R?) Westerveld of Wilhelmina won the Argus Medal which the paper's football correspondent Bill Fleming had presented for the first time in 1954. Today the Bill Fleming Medal is presented to the Premier League player of the year as chosen by the Victorian media.

George Cross won the Ampol Cup, the night competition sponsored by the petrol company.

Below the State League there were four divisions of the Metropolitan League, two in the North and two in the South. There was also a Provisional League which started in 1954 to help accommodate the growing number of clubs which wished to take part. There were six divisions of juniors from Under–13 to Under–17 and an Under–20 League. Football was also growing in the regions of Victoria with strong competitions in the La Trobe Valley, Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and other centres.

Victoria travelled to Queensland in 1958 where it won both its matches, by 4–1 and 3–2 and regained the Football Association Trophy. Frankie Loughran was the outstanding player for Victoria in the first match, scoring a hat-trick and setting up Don Hodgson for the winner in the second one. I played veterans football with and against Frankie and his Irish wit was just as likely to reduce you to helpless laughter on the pitch as off it.

Sir Stan Visits Victoria

1958 was the year that Blackpool toured Australia and played two matches in Victoria. On 25 May it beat Victoria by eight goals to nil and on 31 May it downed Australia by seven goals to nil. Both games were at Olympic Park and 25,000 turned out for the second one. Stanley Matthews was the David Beckham of the day in terms of crowd appeal and popular interest, but he was anything but the Hollywood superstar in manner and behaviour. He was 43 when he toured Australia, but went on playing until 1965 when he was 50. He was knighted for his services to football.

Blackpool was not a one-man band and the team included internationalists like George Farm in goal, Bill Perry, born in South Africa but capped by England, Jackie Mudie, Scottish World cup inside forward, and a young Jimmy Armfield, later captain of England.

It was also the year of the Manchester United air crash at Munich which decimated the Busby Babes and the World Cup in Sweden which introduced a young Brazilian named Pele to the football fraternity.

In Victoria we also had a (Laidlaw) World Cup but that was a tournament between the different groups of immigrants where players from a range of clubs represented their national teams.

Australia sent a team to tour New Zealand in August with four Victorians in the squad.

A lighting carnival was arranged for the Queen's Birthday weekend with the proceeds of over £400 pounds going to Anti-Cancer Campaign Committee, but Soccer News, the weekly magazine of VASFA carried advertisements for tobacco companies with prizes of cartons of cigarettes!
Then again Soccer News also had lots of soccer gear.

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SOCCER NEWS

PRICE 1/-

SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 1958

The Magazine of the Victorian Amateur Soccer Football Association

Registered at the G.P.O., Melb., for transmission by post as a periodical.

★ News
★ Pictures
★ Highlights
★ Records

SOCCER NEWS April 19, 1958

A SMOOTH START

With four rounds completed in the State League and three rounds in the other senior sections, we can take stock of the opening of Season 1958 — one which, we feel, is the best for many seasons. A maximum of exciting games and a minimum of incidents — the type of incidents which are not good publicity.

In the State League, Slavia have shown once again that they are a most unpredictable side, and must receive the greatest respect from their opponents.

Hakoah provided a bombshell by notching 12 goals against George Cross, and could have scored more, according to the spectators present. The score is hard to believe, following the good start made by George Cross.

Juventus appear to be the danger team, with their fast play, and could top the League ladder.

Moreland, despite five injuries, appear to be settling down, but Hellenic and Brighton followers must be shaking their heads. However, with 22 matches to play this season as against the former 18, time is on their side.

Many complaints have been received from First Division North and South sections that their publicity can be summed up in one word — NIL.

We can assure our public that the broadcasting stations on Fridays and Saturdays will supply their quota of information, but we can only rely on the goodwill of the daily press to remember that the State League is not the only League playing in Melbourne.

We are also certain that if any team other than the State teams misbehaves, the daily press will then supply the publicity — the only snag being that it will be the wrong type.

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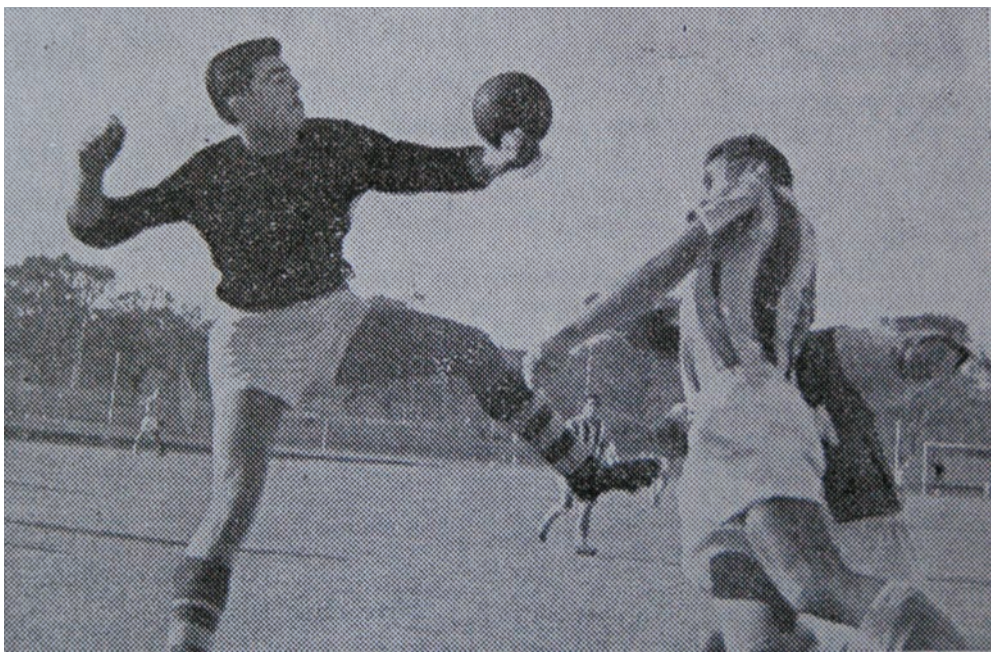
The front page and opening story of *Soccer News* from 1958 welcomes the new State league and by all accounts it's off to a smooth start.

Words by Roy Hay

Photos by Les Shorrock

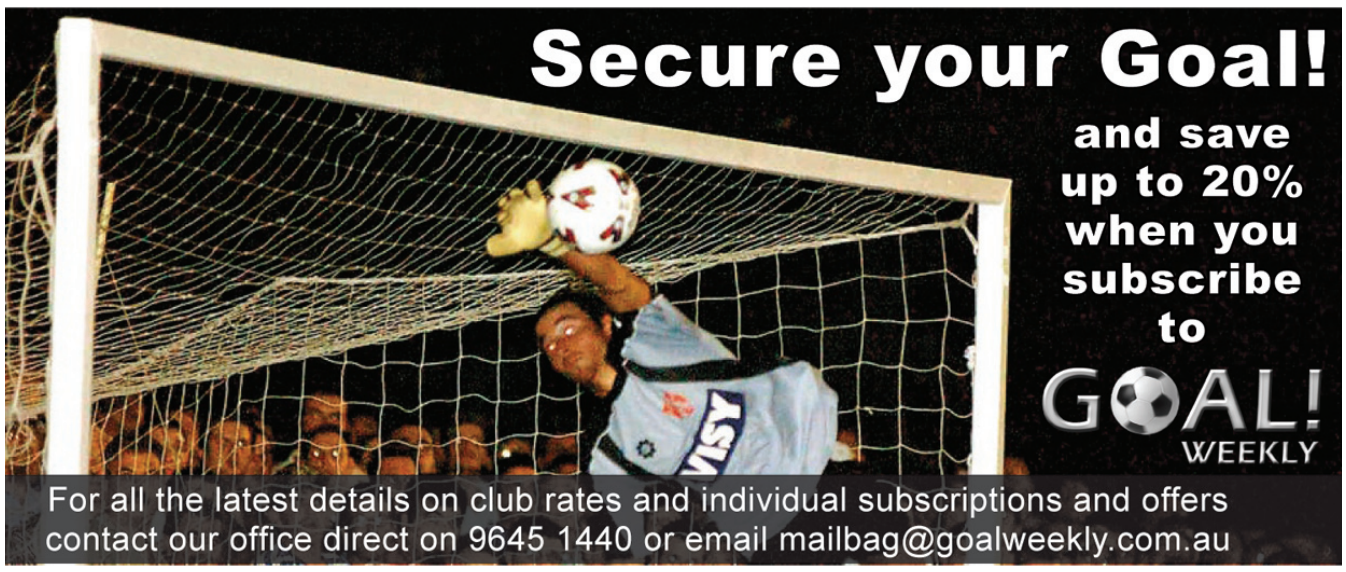
How it all finished in the inaugural State League competition...

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	22	15	5	2	51	24	35
Wilhelmina	22	13	5	4	78	24	31
Moreland	22	11	6	5	53	23	28
Hakoah	22	12	4	6	59	30	28
Box Hill	22	10	5	7	46	47	25
Polonia	22	10	4	8	45	36	24
Slavia	22	10	4	8	37	32	24
George Cross	22	7	4	11	31	53	18
Geelong	22	6	5	11	25	53	17
JUST	22	5	5	12	29	47	15
Hellenic	22	4	2	16	32	60	10
Brighton	22	4	1	17	22	79	9



Goalkeeper Hobson of Moreland doing a balancing act with the ball in a match against Juventus under a challenge from Trentini on 12th April 1958. Photo: Sam Gold, *Soccer News*.

A bit of this, that & the other...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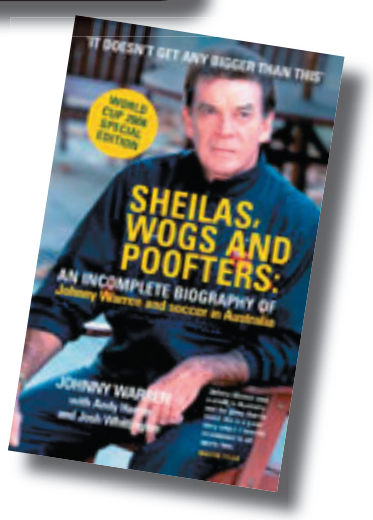
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Synopsis
From the days you were called a "sheila", "wog" or "poofter" if you played soccer to today when players such as Harry Kewell are celebrated as our brightest sporting stars and prized by overseas clubs; from the curse placed on the Socceroos in 1969 by an African witch doctor through to more than thirty agonising years of trying to qualify for soccer's Holy Grail, the World Cup, Johnny Warren reveals the highs and lows of Australian soccer's past and present, and how its future success can be achieved.

Thanks to our friends at Melbourne Sports Books here's your chance to win a free football prize.

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Q. Which Socceroo announced his retirement from international football after the Qatar match?

a. Mark Viduka
b. Craig Moore
c. Charlie Yankos

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A QUESTION OF SPORT ? ? ? ? ? ?

1. As a player, Socceroo coach Pim Verbeek, predominantly played his football with which Dutch side? Ajax, Feyenoord or Sparta Rotterdam?

.....

2. Which former Fawkner Blues goal-getter has signed for Heidelberg United for the new Foxtel Cup season?

.....

3. Who scored Australia's first goal against Qatar the other night?

.....

4. Name the 2007 Foxtel Cup top goalscorer who joined Frankston Pines during the off season.

.....

5. Who is the coach of newly promoted Coburg United?

.....

6. Can you remember which four teams were relegated from the Foxtel Cup at the end of last season?

.....

7. Which West Ham United star wore the captain's arm band for the Socceroos in its opening World Cup qualifier against Qatar?

.....

8. Held in Australia in 1981, Qatar finished runners-up to Germany in the World Youth Championships. What was the score in the Final?

.....

9. Do you know who the Socceroos' assistant coach is ?

.....

10. Which team won the first ever State League Championship in 1958?

.....

A German defender slides in to tackle a Qatari player during the final of the World Youth Championships played in Sydney in 1981.

Answers

1. Sparta Rotterdam, 2. Mark Tsiorlas, 3. Josh Kennedy, 4. Esala Masi, 5. Joe Montemurro, 6. Sunshine Georgies, Essendon Royals, Kingston City and Springvale White Eagles, 7. Lucas Neil, 8. 4-0, 9.Henk Duut, 10. Juventus.

ON THE BOX

English Premier League

Feb 12 Arsenal v Blackburn
6.55 am Fox Sports 1

Feb 23 Birmingham v Arsenal
11.40 pm Fox Sports 3

Feb 24 Liverpool v Middlesbrough
1.55 am Fox Sports 3

Feb 24 Fulham v West Ham
1.55 am (Viewers Choice)

Feb 24 Portsmouth v Sunderland
1.55 am (Viewers Choice)

Feb 24 Wigan v Derby
1.55 am (Viewers Choice)

Feb 24 Newcastle v Manchester United
4.10 am Fox Sports 3

Feb 24 Reading v Aston Villa
11.25 pm Fox Sports 1

Feb 25 Blackburn v Bolton
1.55 am Fox Sports 1

Feb 26 Manchester City v Everton
6.55 am Fox Sports 1

Mar 2 Manchester City v Wigan
4.10 am Fox Sports 3

Mar 3 Bolton v Liverpool
12.25 am Fox Sports 1

Mar 3 Everton v Portsmouth
2.55 am Fox Sports 1

A-League

Feb 17 Preliminary Final
6.00 pm Fox Sports 2

Feb 24 Grand Final
6.00 pm Fox Sports 1

Coca-Cola Championship

Bristol City v Crystal Palace
Tuesday 19 February
6.30 am
Fox Sports 1

Carling Cup Final

Chelsea v Tottenham
Monday 25 February
1.55 am
Fox Sports 2

Total Football

Feb 14 7.30 pm Fox Sports 1
Feb 21 7.30 pm Fox Sports 2
Feb 28 7.30 pm Fox Sports 1

FOX SPORTS

QUEENSLAND ROAR
2 - 0
SYDNEY FC

Courtesy FFA

ROAR ENDS SYDNEY TITLE HOPES

Record crowd sees Roar prosper

Queensland Roar has earned a deserved place in next Sunday's Hyundai A-League preliminary final against either the Central Coast or Newcastle after beating a 10-man Sydney FC 2-0 in Brisbane.

The much anticipated semi-final clash was delayed almost 40 minutes after a vicious storm hit Suncorp Stadium just before kick-off.

But a 36,221 record-breaking home crowd didn't have to wait much longer to see Queensland finally open its season's account against Sydney thanks to Reinaldo's composed finish.

Worse was to come for the visitors when Robbie Middleby received his marching orders from referee Mark Shield for a professional foul on Matt McKay, leaving Sydney to play a man light for 70 minutes.

The Roar hadn't broken Sydney's resolute defence in five meetings this season, so perhaps it was no surprise Reinaldo's seventh of a fruitful season had to be a genuine goal of the season contender.

First, the Brazilian anticipated Craig Moore's diagonal through ball slowing up on the sodden pitch.

Then, after shrugging off Ufuk Talay's challenge, the 23-year-old bore down on Mark Milligan, effortlessly skipping inside the Qantas Socceroos defender and lofting a delicate finish high over Clint Bolton into the roof of the net.

Bolton's sprawling saves from Marcinho's skidding drive and Reinaldo's powerful downward header kept Sydney in the hunt at half-time.

But the Sydney shot-stopper could do nothing to prevent Ognenovski's confident late penalty as his side slipped to its first away defeat since last year's semi-final loss in Newcastle.

"It was always going to be tough once Robbie Middleby got sent off but I think we did quite well to be honest, And if you look at where we've come from we've had a good run. We've lost two in 14," said Kosmina.

"But it came down to chances. We could have finished Queensland off two weeks ago."

Minor Semi-Final – 2nd Leg Details

Queensland Roar 2
(Reinaldo 12', Sasa Ognenovski 83'(pen))
Sydney FC 0

Queensland Roar: 1.Liam REDDY (gk), 2.Andrew PACKER, 4.Craig MOORE (Captain), 5.Josh McCLOUGHAN, 7.Michael ZULLO (12.Tahj MINNIECON 69'), 8.Massimo MURDOCCA, 11.REINALDO (9.Simon LYNCH 12'), 15.Matt McKAY, 19.Sasa Ognenovski, 22.Robbie KRUSE, 23.MARCINHO.

Yellow Cards: Andrew Packer 2', Massimo Murdocca 47', Liam Reddy 73'.
Red Cards: Nil

Sydney FC: 1.Clint BOLTON (gk), 2.Iain FYFE, 6.Tony POPOVIC (Captain), 7.Robbie MIDDLEBY, 8.Ruben ZADKOVICH, 10.Steve CORICA,14.Alex BROSQUE (11.Brendon SANTALAB 68'), 15.Terry McFLYNN, 16 Mark MILLIGAN (21.Adam BIDDLE 86'), 23.Ufuk TALAY, 26.Brendan RENAUD (29. Mark ROBERTSON. 71')

Yellow Cards: Brendan Renaud 14', Ufuk Talay 66', Tony Popovic 82'.
Red Cards: Robbie Middleby 19'

A-LEAGUE FINAL STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Central Coast Mariners	**21**	**10**	**4**	**7**	**30**	**25**	**5**	**34**
2 Newcastle Jets	21	9	7	5	25	21	4	34
3 Sydney FC	**21**	**8**	**8**	**5**	**28**	**24**	**4**	**32**
4 Queensland Roar	21	8	7	6	25	21	4	31
5 Melbourne Victory	**21**	**6**	**9**	**6**	**29**	**29**	**0**	**27**
6 Adelaide United	21	6	8	7	31	29	2	26
7 Perth Glory	**21**	**4**	**8**	**9**	**27**	**34**	**-7**	**20**
8 Wellington Phoenix	21	5	5	11	25	37	-12	20

PRELIMINARY FINAL

Jets v Roar
Sunday 17th Feb KO 6pm

TOP SCORERS

12- Joel Griffiths (NJ)
9- Shane Smeltz (WP)
8 - Jamie Harnwell (PG), Alex Brosque (SFC)
7- John Aloisi (CCM), Danny Allsopp (MV)
6- Archie Thompson (MV), Nikita Rukavytsya (PG), Reinaldo (QR), Sasho Petrovski (CCM)
5- Adam Kwasnik (CCM), Lucas Pantelis (AU), Bruce Djite (AU), Steve Corica (SFC), Travis Dodd (AU)
4- Billy Celeski (PG), Carlos Hernandez (MV), Daniel (WP), Kevin Muscat (MV), Paul Agostino (AU), Robbie Kruse (QR)
3- Adrian Caceres (MV), Felipe (WP), James Holland (NJ), John Hutchinson (CCM), Josh McCloughan (QR), Marcinho (QR), Mark Bridge (NJ), Matt McKay (QR), Nathan Burns (AU), Ufuk Talay (SFC)

MARINERS
3 - 0
NEWCASTLE JETS

Courtesy FFA

MARINERS IN GRAND FINAL

Central Coast has qualified for its second Hyundai A-League grand final after a thrilling 3-0 extra-time major semi-final win over Newcastle in front of 19,112 fans at Bluetongue Stadium on Sunday night.

The Mariners won the two-leg major semi-final 3-2 after scoring three unanswered goals in the second leg on Sunday.

Sasho Petrovski scored two goals for the Mariners including the semi-final winner in the fifth minute of extra-time.

After Newcastle won the first leg of the major semi-final 2-0 Central Coast went into the second leg needing two goals to draw level.

And they squared the ledger after goals to Adam Kwasnik in the 37th minute and Petrovski in the 73rd.

Petrovski's semi-final winner came five minutes into the 30-minute period of extra time.

Hyundai A-League 2007/08 – Crowd Figures

Club	Home Games	Ave.	Low	High	Total
Adelaide United	**10**	**12,697**	**10,256**	**25,039**	**126,966**
Central Coast Mariners	**10**	**12,738**	**8,113**	**19,238**	**127,382**
Melbourne Victory	**10**	**26,064**	**20,938**	**31,884**	**260,642**
Newcastle Jets	**11**	**13,209**	**8,112**	**16,433**	**145,303**
Perth Glory	**11**	**7,606**	**6,252**	**9,614**	**83,664**
Queensland Roar	**11**	**16,949**	**8,815**	**31,933**	**186,436**
Sydney FC	**11**	**16,382**	**10,732**	**33,458**	**180,197**
Wellington Phoenix	**10**	**11,683**	**8,039**	**18,345**	**116,833**
Total	**84**	**14,612**	**6,252**	**33,458**	**1,227,423**

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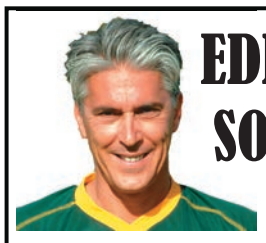

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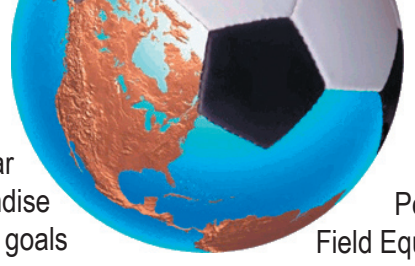

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